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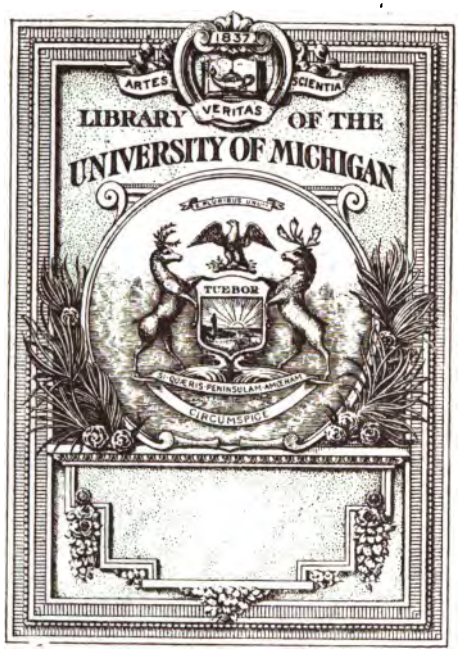

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THE MERRY CHANTER

BY

FRANK R. STOCKTON

AUTHOR OF "RUDDER GRANGE," "THE LADY, OR THE TIGER?" "THE LATE MRS. NULL," "THE CASTING AWAY OF MRS. LECKS AND MRS. ALESHINE," ETC.

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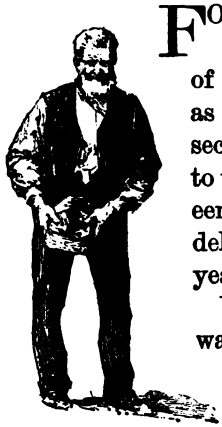
THE *MERRY CHANTER*

I

MY CAREER IS ENDED



Captain Timon Mucher.

FOR two years Doris and I had been engaged to be married. The first of these years appeared to us about as long as any ordinary year, but the second seemed to stretch itself out to the length of fifteen or even eighteen months. There had been many delays and disappointments in that year.

We were both young enough to wait and both old enough to know we ought to wait; and so we waited. But, as we frequently admitted to ourselves, there was nothing particularly jolly in this condition of things. Every young man should have sufficient respect for himself to make him hesitate

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before entering into a matrimonial alliance in which he would have to be supported by his wife. This would have been the case had Doris and I married within those two years.

I am by profession an analyzer of lava. Having been from my boyhood an enthusiastic student of mineralogy and geology, I gradually became convinced that there was no reason why precious metals and precious stones should not be found at spots on the earth where nature herself attended to the working of her own mines. That is to say that I can see no reason why a volcano should not exist at a spot where there were valuable mineral deposits; and this being the case, there is no reason why those deposits should not be thrown out during eruptions in a melted form, or unmelted and mixed with the ordinary lava.

Hoping to find proof of the correctness of my theory, I have analyzed lava from a great many volcanoes. I have not been able to afford to travel much, but specimens have been sent to me from various parts of the world. My attention was particularly turned to extinct volcanoes; for should I find traces of precious deposits in the lava of one of these, not only could its old lava beds be worked, but by artificial means eruptions of a minor order might be produced, and fresher and possibly richer material might be thrown out.

But I had not yet received any specimen of lava which encouraged me to begin workings in the vicinity in which it was found.

My theories met with little favor from other scient-

ists, but this did not discourage me. Should success come it would be very great.

Doris had expectations which she sometimes thought might reasonably be considered great ones, but her actual income was small. She had now no immediate family, and for some years lived with what she called "law kin." She was of a most independent turn of mind, and being of age could do what she pleased with her own whenever it should come to her.

My own income was extremely limited, and what my actual necessities allowed me to spare from it was devoted to the collection of the specimens on the study of which I based the hopes of my fortunes.

In regard to our future alliance, Doris depended mainly upon her expectations, and she did not hesitate, upon occasion, frankly and plainly to tell me so. Naturally I objected to such dependence, and anxiously looked forward to the day when a little lump of lava might open before me a golden future which I might honorably ask any woman to share. But I do not believe that anything I said upon this subject influenced the ideas of Doris.

The lady of my love was a handsome girl, quick and active of mind and body, nearly always of a lively mood, and sometimes decidedly gay. She had seen a good deal of the world and the people in it, and was "up," as she put it, in a great many things. Moreover, she declared that she had "a heart for any fate." It has sometimes occurred to me that this remark would better be deferred until the heart and the fate had had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other.

We lived not far apart in a New England town, and calling upon her one evening I was surprised to find the lively Doris in tears. Her tears were not violent, however, and she quickly dried them; and, without waiting for any inquiries on my part, she informed me of the cause of her trouble.

"The *Merry Chanter* has come in," she said.

"Come in!" I ejaculated.

"Yes," she answered, "and that is not the worst of it; it has been in a long time."

I knew all about the *Merry Chanter*. This was a ship. It was her ship which was to come in. Years ago this ship had been freighted with the ventures of her family, and had sailed for far-off seas. The results of those ventures, together with the ship itself, now belonged to Doris. They were her expectations.

"But why does this grieve you?" I asked. "Why do you say that the coming of the ship, to which you have been looking forward with so much ardor, is not the worst of it?"

"Because it is n't," she answered. "The rest is a great deal worse. The whole affair is a doleful failure. I had a letter to-day from Mooseley, a little town on the sea-coast. The *Merry Chanter* came back there three years ago with nothing in it. What has become of what it carried out, or what it ought to have brought back, nobody seems to know. The captain and the crew left it the day after its arrival at Mooseley. Why they went away, or what they took with them, I have not heard, but a man named Asa Cantling writes me that the *Merry Chanter* has been lying at his wharf for three years; that he

wants to be paid the wharfage that is due him; and that for a long time he has been trying to find out to whom the ship belongs. At last he has discovered that I am the sole owner, and he sends to me his bill for wharfage, stating that he believes it now amounts to more than the vessel is worth."

"Absurd!" I cried. "Any vessel must be worth more than its wharfage rates for three years. This man must be imposing upon you."

Doris did not answer. She was looking drearily out of the window at the moonlighted landscape. Her heart and her fate had come together, and they did not appear to suit each other.

I sat silent, also, reflecting. I looked at the bill which she had handed to me, and then I reflected again, gazing out of the window at the moonlighted landscape.

It so happened that I then had on hand a sum of money equal to the amount of this bill, which amount was made up not only of wharfage rates, but of other expenses connected with the long stay of the vessel at Asa Cantling's wharf.

My little store of money was the result of months of savings and a good deal of personal self-denial. Every cent of it had its mission in one part of the world or another. It was intended solely to carry on the work of my life, my battle for fortune. It was to show me, in a wider and more thorough manner than had ever been possible before, what chance there was for my finding the key which should unlock for me the treasures in the store-house of the earth.

I thought for a few minutes longer, and then I said,

"Doris, if you should pay this bill and redeem the vessel, what good would you gain?"

She turned quickly towards me. "I should gain a great deal of good," she said. "In the first place I should be relieved of a soul-chilling debt. Is n't that a good? And of a debt, too, which grows heavier every day. Mr. Cantling writes that it will be difficult to sell the ship, for it is not the sort that the people thereabout want. And if he breaks it up he will not get half the amount of his bill. And so there it must stay, piling wharfage on wharfage, and all sorts of other expenses on those that have gone before, until I become the leading woman bankrupt of the world."

"But if you paid the money and took the ship," I asked, "what would you do with it?"

"I know exactly what I would do with it," said Doris. "It is my inheritance, and I would take that ship and make our fortunes. I would begin in a humble way just as people begin in other businesses. I would carry hay, codfish, ice, anything, from one port to another. And when I had made a little money in this way I would sail away to the Orient and come back loaded with rich stuffs and spices."

"Did the people who sailed the ship before do that?" I asked.

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," she answered; "and they ran away with the proceeds. I do not know that you can feel as I do," she continued. "The *Merry Chanter* is mine. It is my all. For years I have looked forward to what it might bring me. It has brought me nothing but a debt, but I feel that it

can be made to do better than that, and my soul is on fire to make it do better."

It is not difficult to agree with a girl who looks as this one looked and who speaks as this one spoke.

"Doris," I exclaimed, "if you go into that sort of thing I go with you. I will set the *Merry Chanter* free."

"How can you do it?" she cried.

"Doris," I said, "hear me. Let us be cool and practical."

"I think neither of us is very cool," she said, "and perhaps not very practical. But go on."

"I can pay this bill," I said, "but in doing it I shall abandon all hope of continuing what I have chosen as my life work; the career which I have marked out for myself will be ended. Would you advise me to do this? And if I did it would you marry me now with nothing to rely upon but our little incomes and what we could make from your ship? Now, do not be hasty. Think seriously, and tell me what you would advise me to do."

She answered instantly, "Take me, and the *Merry Chanter*."

I gave up my career.

II

SHE IS HE, AND IT IS OURS

MAN and wife stood upon Asa Cantling's wharf at Mooseley, gazing with wide-open eyes at the *Merry Chanter*. All claims had been paid. The receipt was in my pocket.

"I will not look upon the ship," Doris had said, "until it is truly ours; until every taint of debt shall have been wiped away."

How long, how high, how big it was! It had two towering masts. As I gazed upon it my heart swelled. It was a career!

Doris suddenly seized me by the hand. "Come," she said, "there he is!"

"Who?" I exclaimed.

"The Merry Chanter himself!" she cried, running with me towards the bow of the vessel, which on our first approach had been concealed from us by a pile of barrels.

We went upon the narrow space between the barrels and the wharf and stood close to the Merry Chanter, the wooden figure-head, which gave the name to the ship.

He was a stalwart fellow eight feet high, and so firmly fastened to the bow of the vessel that the waves of the sea and the winds of the air had never been able to move him. But long voyages in storms, in glowing heat, or in icy spray had had an effect on his physical organization. When young he had probably been of pleasing colors, but now every trace of paint had vanished; even the mahogany brownness of his nose and cheeks was probably due to the natural hue of the wood of which his head was formed. The rest of him was of a uniform weather-beaten grayness.

The rest of him must be understood to mean what remained of him; the whole of his original self was not there. His head was thrown back; his long hair hung upon his shoulders; and his mouth was open, as if in the act of trolling out some jolly sea song. His right arm had been stretched out after the manner of one who is moved by the spirit of the words he sings, but the greater part of that arm was now gone. Some wild, rollicking wave had rushed to meet him, taken him by the hand, and gone off with his arm.

His other arm held a short cloak about him and still remained entire, but he had no feet and one of his knees had been knocked away, but still he stood up, bold and stout, chanting his brave roundelays, which one could hear only when waves were tossing or winds roaring. What if his nose was split, his chin dented, and his beard broken — the spirit of the Merry Chanter was still there.

How many a wave crest must have swashed into that open mouth as the chanter boldly chanted, and

the ship plunged! But how merrily he had risen, all dripping, and had sang on!

The eyes of Doris were glowing as she looked upon him. "He shall lead us to fortune," she said, taking my hand. "Shall he not?"

The spirit of the chanter and of Doris was upon me. "Indeed he shall!" I answered, warmly.

Asa Cantling, or as he was called in the village, Captain Asa, now came upon the wharf and asked us if we would like to go on board. Like to! Of course we would! To go on board was the dominant purpose of our souls.

Captain Asa was an oldish man, but reaching up to some iron bars which projected from the vessel he clambered up her side with the monkey-like agility which belongs to a sailor. In a few minutes he lowered a ladder with a hand-rail, by which Doris and I went on board.

"She 's a good schooner yet," said Captain Asa, as with swelling hearts we stood upon our deck. "She 's too big for us, but she 's got good timbers in her; an' if you 'll have her towed to New Bedford, or Gloucester, or some such port, I don't doubt you 'd get more for her than you 've paid."

I looked at Doris. Her eyes flashed, and her nostrils dilated, but she made no answer to these cold-blooded words. We walked the length of our deck. How long it was! Captain Asa pointed out the various objects of interest as we passed them — windlass, galley, capstan, wheel; all nautical, real, and ours!

"I 've kept the hatches down," said Captain Asa,

"skylights shut, an' everything stowed away ship-shape. I 'd ask you to go below, but we must come again for that."

Almost with one voice we besought the captain not to let us keep him a moment from his dinner. We would remain on board a little longer. We were not ready for our dinner. We watched him as he went down the ladder and into the village, and then we sat down on a double-pointed log that was bolted to the deck. The bulwarks were so high that we could not be seen.

We did not sit long. Up sprang Doris. "Let us go below!" she cried. I followed her, and after entering the cook's galley by mistake, we found the door at the head of the stairs which led below, and hurried down.

The air below was close, and the ship's smells were of an old and seasoned sort; but everything was excitingly interesting. We ran from one end to the other of this lower deck. We looked into what must have been the captain's cabin. It was cozy to an extreme that made Doris clap her hands. We looked into the sailors' bunks. We looked at the great masts which came from below and went up above — our masts!

We examined everything forward, amidships, and aft, and then I lifted a hatch and we looked down into the dark depths of the hold. We could not see much and did not dare to descend without a light, but the cool air which came up to us smelled as if all the odors of Araby and the spicy East had been tarred and salted and stowed away down there.

When at last we ascended to the deck Doris stood still and looked about her. Her face and eyes shone with a happy glow. Stretching out her right arm she exclaimed: "All hail to our *Merry Chanter!* We shall sail in him to the sunny seas of the south, and, if we feel like it, steer him into the frozen mysteries of the north. He shall give us fortune, and, what is better still, we shall go with him wherever he goes, getting all manner of fun and delight out of him while he is lifting us to opulence. And now I think it must be a good deal past our dinner-time, and we 'd better go and see about it."

As we walked through the village to the little hotel where we had taken lodgings, two ideas revolved themselves in my mind. The first of these I mentioned to my wife.

"Doris," said I, "as we own a ship, and intend to sail on it, we should be more nautical, at least in our speech. You should not speak of a ship as 'he'; 'she' is the proper expression."

"I don't agree with you," said Doris. "I think it is all nonsense calling ships 'she' without regard to their real gender. It is all very well to call the *Sarah Penrose* 'she,' or the *Alice*, or the *Mary H.*,"—pointing to fishing vessels in the little harbor,—"but when you speak of the *Royal George* or the *Emperor William* as 'she' it is silly and absurd. The Merry Chanter is a man. He gave his manly name to our ship. Our ship is not a female."

"But," said I, "every sailor calls his ship 'she.' It is tradition, it is custom, in fact it has become law."

"It is all stuff and nonsense," she said. "I don't

care a snap for such tradition and such law! Sailors ought to have learned better by this time."

"But you don't want to be laughed at, do you?" I asked.

"No, I don't," she answered promptly. "We cannot have proper authority in our ship if we are laughed at, and I will do this: I will consent to call the ship 'it,' but I will never consent to call it 'she.'"

And with these words we entered the hotel.

The other idea which entered my mind was a more important one. I had noticed, especially when we were on board the ship, that Doris was taking the lead in everything. It was she who had declared what we should do, where we should go, that one thing should be done or another left undone. Now this was all wrong. It was a blow at the just constitution of matrimony. Of course, in these early days of our married life I was glad to let my bride talk and plan as she pleased; but she was going too far. If this thing were allowed to continue it would become a habit.

What step I should take to nip in the bud this little weed which might grow until it overshadowed our happiness I could not immediately determine. It must be a quick, vigorous, and decided step. It must settle the matter once and for all time. Of course I would be tender, but I must be firm. As soon as possible I would decide what the step should be.

That afternoon we went to see Captain Asa to ask him what sort of marine traffic he thought we would better begin with.

"You see," said Doris, "we want to engage in some

coastwise trading, in order that our profits may enable us to set out upon longer and more important voyages."

"That is the state of the case," said I. "My wife agrees with me entirely."

"Now, what shall we load with first," said Doris, "hay, fish, or ice?"

Captain Asa smiled. "As for fish," he said, "our own boats bring in all the fish that can be turned into money in this town, an' if we send away any they 've got to get to market while they are fresh, an' it may be the railroad 'll get 'em there quicker. An' as for hay, we don't get much hay from along the coast — that is, if we want the cattle to eat it. That generally comes from the West, by rail. Ice? Well, this is n't the season to ship ice."

"But there must be other things," said Doris, anxiously.

"Yes," said the captain, "there is. Now I 'll tell you what would n't be a bad thing. Sail your vessel up to Boston an' get a load of flour. You can afford to bring it down cheaper than the railroad can. There 'd be some took in this town. I 'd take a barrel. An' a good deal might be sold along the coast if you put it cheap enough. Then, again, when you get to Boston you may have the good luck to sell your vessel."

"The *Merry Chanter* is not to be sold," said Doris, emphatically.

"All right," said the captain. "That point sha'n't be touched upon ag'in. Well, if you 're goin' to set out on trading v'yages, you 'll want a crew."

"Yes," said I, "of course we shall want a crew."

"A crew costs a good deal, does n't it?" asked Doris.

"That depends," said Captain Asa, "on the kind of crew you get. Now an out-and-out crew for that schooner —"

"But we don't want an out-and-out crew," interrupted Doris; "and if you 'll tell us what such a crew will cost it will simply drive us stark mad, and the whole thing will come to an end."

"You must understand, Captain," I said, "that we wish to make a very quiet and inexpensive beginning. We can spend but little money at first, and cannot afford to employ large bodies of men."

"It is the management of sails that occupies a good deal of the time of a crew, is n't it?" asked Doris.

"Yes," answered the captain. "That 's a good part of it."

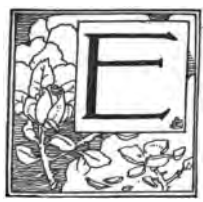
"Well, then," continued Doris, "my idea is this: we 'll sail the *Merry Chanter* at first with as few sails as possible, and then we need only have enough men to work those sails."

"All right!" said the captain. "Things can often be done one way as well as another if you have a mind to. There 's many a good ship been sailed short-handed. You can't make quick voyages that way; but as you are the owners, that 's your business."

We both agreed that we had no intention at present of making the *Merry Chanter* a greyhound of the sea; and, after some further consideration of the subject, Captain Asa said he would talk to some people in the town and see what he could do toward getting us a crew of the sort we wanted.

III

WE SHIP A CREW



ARLY the next morning an elderly personage introduced himself as Captain Timon Mucher. He was a man of medium height, gray hairs, and a little bowed by years; but he had sharp bright eyes, and a general air of being able to jump about a yard from the floor. His storm-beaten features were infused with a modest kindliness which instantly attracted Doris and me.

"Cap'n Cantlin'," said he, "told me that you 're lookin' for a crew for that schooner o' yourn. Now, sir, if you 're agreeable, I 'd like to go in her as skipper. Everybody in this town knows what sort o' a skipper I am, and they 'll tell you. I did think I 'd about give up navigatin', but when I heerd yesterday that that schooner that 's been lying so long at Cantlin's wharf was goin' to sea, there come over me the same kind of hanker for outside rollin' and pitchin' that I used to have when I happened to be ashore without a ship. I 've got a good cat-rigged fishin'-boat and I go out in her every day that 's fit. And there is times when I get a good deal of outside pitchin' and rollin'. But pitchin' and rollin' in a cat-

boat is n't what a man that 's been brought up to the sea lays awake more 'n half an hour and hankers for. If there had n't been no schooner goin' to sail from this port and wantin' hands I guess I 'd stuck pretty quiet to the cat-boat; but now there is a schooner sailin' from here and wantin' hands I 'd like to go in her as skipper."

Doris and I looked at each other, and then at the old man. Instinctively we both stretched out our hands to him. He was captain of the *Merry Chanter.*

It was plain enough that Captain Timon Mucher was delighted with our decision.

"Well, now," said he, "it just tickles me to sail with owners like you, who knows your own minds and settles a bargain as quick as a squall tips over a sail-boat full of young fellers from town."

I did not like to break in on the old man's satisfaction, but I felt bound to state that the bargain was not yet completed.

"Bother bargains!" said Doris. "We 're going to have the captain anyway! Did n't we say so?"

"But it is possible," said I, "that he may expect a — a salary larger than we can afford to pay."

"As to that," said Captain Timon, "there need n't be no words about that; I 'll go sheers with you, if you like."

This was reasonable, and pleased the owners. We were very willing to give him part of the profits.

"What share would you require?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "we can divide what we make each v'yage into six parts, and I 'll take one of 'em. Does that strike you as fair?"

It struck us as quite fair.

We now had a long talk with our captain and got all sorts of information. At length he left us; but in about an hour he, with Captain Asa, came just as we were about to start out for the wharf, and brought with them three elderly men, evidently of the seafaring class. These were presented to us as Captain Retire Garnish, Captain Jabez Teel, and Captain Cyrus Bodship.

The three stranger captains gravely came forward and shook hands with us. As I have said, they were all elderly men; the youngest-looking of them, Captain Cyrus Bodship, must have been sixty. Strange to say, my wife and I were both struck by a certain similarity in these men, a sort of family likeness. This must have been due to the fact, Doris afterwards remarked, that they were all sons of Mother Ocean, for, in fact, they were not at all alike. Captain Garnish was large and tall, Captain Teel was of a sparish figure, while Captain Cyrus Bodship was short, and inclined to be stout.

In one respect they were alike; each wore a very large and stiffly starched shirt-bosom with a black silk neckerchief, and each one looked uncomfortable in his suit of Sunday clothes. In this respect Captain Cyrus Bodship had a slight advantage over his companions, for he had on a pair of black velvet slippers embroidered with red.

"These gentlemen," said Captain Asa, "would like to ship as your crew."

Doris and I could not help smiling. "Crew?" said I. "I thought they were all captains."

"So they are, so they are," said Captain Asa. "But they can speak for themselves."

We now all seated ourselves in the little parlor, and Captain Garnish, without any hesitation, began to speak for himself.

"As for me, I 'm a captain if ever anybody was one. Since my thirty-second year I 've been skipper on one craft or another till four years ago last April I settled down here and took to fishin'. That 's my history. When I heard that Cap'n Timon here was goin' to be skipper of your schooner I says to myself: 'I 'd like to sail with him. There ain't nothin' about a ship I don't know, there ain't nothin' about a ship I can't do. I 'd rather go to sea than fish, and I 'm ready to sign the papers.'"

"All that 's about the same with me," said Captain Jabez Teel; "only I did n't get to be captain till I was thirty-eight, and I came here nigh on to five years ago. Otherwise Cap'n Garnish and me is in the same boat, and I 'm ready to sign papers."

Captain Cyrus sat silent a moment with a jolly sort of grin on his face. "I 've been tryin' to think what year it was I was fust made captain, but it 's too fur back; I can't put my finger on it. As for other partic'lars I 'm pretty much in the wake of Cap'n Garnish and Cap'n Teel here. Perhaps I 'm a good ways astern, but I 'm younger than they is, and may overhaul 'em yit. I 'm ready to sign papers."

The situation was interesting and amusing. "Do you mean to say," I asked, "that you three will make a sufficient crew for our vessel?"

Captain Timon immediately spoke up. "Yes, sir.

They are all the crew I want. With them three I 'll sail your schooner, and there won't be no complaint. Yes, sir; that 's what I say."

Engaging three old men as our crew seemed to us a serious matter, and I asked Captain Asa to step with me into a back room. Doris followed.

"Do you really think," I asked the captain, "that these three men can work our ship?"

"Of course they can do it," said he. "Each one of 'em is worth three ordinary seamen; they 've got heads on 'em, they has! An' they 're as lively as old cats, besides. Now there 's Cap'n Garnish. He 's sailed vessels on every sea on this globe. He 's the man that run his vessel — a three-masted schooner she was — from the Straits of Malacca to Madras, nigh on to fifteen hundred miles, on one tack with a stiff nor'-easter, an' a hole in her starboard quarter as big as that table. There wa' n't no time to have his ship docked if he wanted to save his cargo, an' a hole like that could n't be patched up by him an' his crew. And so twenty minutes after he was run into he set every inch of canvas there was a spar for, an' drove her right slam across the Bay of Bengal, with her lee scuppers mostly takin' in water, but her weather-quarter with the hole in it high an dry. When he came into port at Madras they would n't believe that he 'd raced across the bay, with his ship stove in like that."

Doris had listened with admiration. "But could he do that now?" she asked.

"Do it?" said Captain Asa. "Of course he could! He could do it with a hole twice as big! An' there 's

Cap'n Teel," he continued. "He was friz up two years in Melville Straits when he was commandin' of a whaler; an', more 'n that, he has had his ships wrecked under him eleven times, which is four more than anybody in this State can say; an' he an' his crew came out all right every time, either trampin' off on shore or bein' picked up. What he has n't been through is n't worth goin' through!

"An' there 's Cap'n Cyrus. Now Cap'n Cyrus is the luckiest seaman that ever sat on a thwart. He never had nothin' happen to him. He 'd always run into his home port with the same old grin that he set sail with. Once, bound to Australia,—I think it was in '59,—he had his three top-gallant masts blowed away by a typhoon. Now, Cap'n Cyrus said to himself that he guessed he 'd got it this time, an' that he 'd be long overdue at port, for he did n't carry no spare spars along, havin' got out o' the way of carryin' 'em on account of his bein' so lucky an' never havin' no need of 'em; but this did n't make him feel grumpy, for, as he said to himself, a little change would do him good. But, would you believe it? when he anchored at an island to take in fresh water, he went on shore himself, an', climbin' a little hill, he saw, on the other side of the island, another ship takin' in water, an' the skipper was his wife's cousin, Andrew Tinkey, with plenty of spare spars aboard; an' Cap'n Cyrus's vessel bein' rigged up in double-quick time by both crews, she got into port a week before she was looked out for. I tell you what it is, a owner has got to hunt a long while before he finds three such cap'ns as them!"

In spite of my admiration of these noble fellows, I could not help being practical. I could not believe that they would be able to do everything. But when I asked if some younger persons would not be needed on the ship, Captain Asa answered very decidedly: "No, sir; no young fellows nor boys won't be needed. If you shipped a bigger crew the profits would have to be cut up into smaller sheers, and the cap'ns would n't stand that."

"But suppose we don't make any profits," said Doris. "That would be a great loss to these brave old sailors."

"Oh, they won't lose nothin'," said Captain Asa "They 've all got good houses, an' they rent 'em out for the summer to city people. I've got the lettin' of them. They 're all widowers, from two to three times over, except Cap'n Cyrus, an' his wife has been livin' for nigh on to five year at West Imbury, so he 's as free as a sandpiper, an' no funeral in the family nuther."

Again my practical mind asserted itself. "Look you, Captain," said I. "Is it expected that we are to furnish provisions for the crew as well as ourselves, and to supply money for the purchase of the cargo when we get to Boston? If that is the case, I think that two-sixths of the profits is but a poor return."

"Oh, bother the profits," cried Doris. "I want to hoist anchor and put to sea!"

Captain Asa looked at her admiringly. "You 're just like them cap'ns," said he. "They 're all hankerin' to feel the ship heave an' to smell bilge-water. But what you say is worth considerin', sir. I'll go an' speak to 'em about it."

In a few minutes he returned and stated that the captains allowed that what I said had sense in it, and that they all agreed to chip in and each pay one-sixth of expenses for stores and cargo.

"Good!" cried Doris. "Now everything is settled, and let us be on board and away."

But there was a good deal to be done before we could be "on board and away." The captains, however, were as anxious as Doris to be away, and lost no time in the necessary preparations. They knew just what to do and what to get, and naturally we left everything to them.

But the whole of the little town took an interest in the fitting out of the *Merry Chanter*, the stout old ship that had lain so long at Cantling's wharf. Doris received much advice and some small presents from the women, while the men gave a good deal of voluntary service which we well knew was all for the sake of their old mates, the four captains.

Some things I could not help thinking of, and standing by Captain Timon on the wharf, I asked him if a wooden ship lying so long in the water did not accumulate a great many barnacles on her side, which would impede her sailing.

A shade of uneasiness passed over the face of the old man. "Of course," said he, "when a vessel's been tied up for two or three years in salt water it's no more 'n nat'ral that she'd have barnacles on. Natur' is natur' an' there's no gettin' round it, and of course if the barnacles was cleaned off her she 'd make more knots an hour than she would with 'em on her. But I tell you what it is, sir, if you begin with

barnacles there's no tellin' how fur you'll have to go on, nor where you'll stop. Why, sir, if she was my ship, an' things was as they is, I would n't do as much as to paint the door of that galley. If you begin anywhere, barnacles or paint, you're bound to go on, an' there'd be no v'yage made in that ship this year. It would be like old Tom Duffin of Scap's Neck. Tom was about as well off as anybody in these parts. He had a good house an' a big sloop-rigged fishin'-boat. She wa' n't as fast as some, but she was so big and safe-lookin' that the city people who came down here always wanted to go sailin' with Tom, an' he charged 'em high, he did, for in some ways he wa' n't no fool. But bein' with these fine people so much kinder twisted Tom's head, an' one day he went off an' bought himself a new shiny black silk hat. That was Tom's turnin'-p'int. With that hat on his head, his Sunday clothes, which ought to have lasted him all his life, wa' n't good enough, an' he got new ones. Then his wife's clothes wa' n't good enough to go along with them, an' she got new ones. Then the children's clothes wa' n't good enough to go along with them, an' they got new ones. An' then his furnitur' wa' n't good enough to go along with all them fine clothes, and new had to be got. And that made the house look mean, an' Tom set to work to build a new one. There ain't no use carryin' the story all along, but Tom went straight from that new silk hat to the Bremport poor-house, where he is now; and his wife 's a nurse in the chronic ward, an' his children is out in service in Boston. Now, sir, I look upon them barnacles as just the same as that black

"We now all seated ourselves in the little parlor."

hat. If you begin on them you may not bring up at the poor-house, but there's no knowin' where you will bring up. The only thing anybody can know is that there will be no v'yage this year."

I could readily understand Captain Timon's meaning and his anxiety to start on our voyage. If we undertook to put the *Merry Chanter* into good repair the chances of those four old captains feeling the heave of the seas and smelling bilge-water would be small indeed.

"From what you say I suppose you can sail the ship, barnacles or no barnacles," I said.

"Sail her!" exclaimed he. "Just you wait and see! An' the best thing we can do is to hurry up her stores and get sail on her. The longer she lies here the more barnacles she 'll get."

When I repeated this conversation to Doris she declared that Captain Timon was exactly right. "We have no money to bedeck and adorn the *Merry Chanter*," she said, "and if we had I would n't do it. If we got her all into sleek and shiny ship-shape, I suppose we 'd have to have a regular ship-shape crew, and I would n't have that for the world. Let us get on board with our four lively old captains and sail away before anything turns up which will positively have to be done."

IV

THE *MERRY CHANTER* SETS SAIL

AS soon as possible Doris and I took possession of our quarters on the *Merry Chanter*. We occupied the captain's cabin, and our good skipper bunked forward with the crew. "If they was common seamen," said he, "I would n't do it; but as they 're all captains, as well as me, I don't mind."

While busily engaged in arranging our cabin one morning we were informed that some one wanted to speak with us, and we went on deck. There we found a person whom for some days we had noticed walking up and down on the wharf, and showing an evident interest in our ship and our preparations. He was a fresh-looking, smooth-faced young man, over thirty perhaps, who stood up very erect, and whose general air indicated that he was one who, having found out what was good and what was bad in this world, had been content to act upon his knowledge, but at the same time to give himself no airs of superiority to other people who had not found out what he knew. This was a good deal for anybody's air to indicate; but Doris told me

afterwards that it was what she thought this man's air indicated. His manner of speaking to us was at the same time independent and respectful.

"Would it suit you," he said, "to take me on board your ship as a passenger?"

We were somewhat surprised. "Where do you wish to go?" I asked.

"I have been told that you sail for Boston," said he.

I replied that Boston was our destination.

"Very good," said he. "Then I wish to go to Boston."

"But, sir," said Doris, "you can go a great deal quicker by train, you know."

"I do not wish to travel by land," he said. "I wish to sail by sea. I do not care very much to be in Boston, but I wish to go there on a ship."

"Are you a sailor?" I asked.

"No, sir," he said; "I am a butcher. For four years and a half I have carried on butchery in this neighborhood. You can inquire of anybody as to my character. I do not wish to butcher any more, at least for the present. I have saved some money and I intend to travel, and it struck me that I 'd rather begin my travels on your ship than in any other way. I do not wish to work, but to pay my passage. Of course, if there 's a wreck, or a man overboard, or the ship takes fire, I 'm willin' to do my part as man to man. But otherways what I want is to pay my way, and to be beholden to no man, nor to have him beholden to me, exceptin' in such things as are understood to be owed by man to man."

We asked for a little time for consideration and re-

tired to the cabin, whither we summoned Captain Timon.

"He speaks us fair," said Doris. "I think he would make a good passenger."

Captain Timon thought so too. "He 's a very respectable young man," said he; "straightforward an' honest, an' means what he says. If he wants to get the worth of his money travelin', I guess he knows as well as we do that he can get it on board this schooner; an' the money he pays will be somethin' sure to count on."

"What shall we charge him?" asked Doris.

"Well," said Captain Timon, "if you make it somethin' that can be divided even into six parts I 'll be satisfied, an' I know the others will."

I then made a suggestion based upon the ordinary fare to Boston, which, after some modification, was agreed to; and I went on deck to inform the young man that for so much money we would take him as passenger to Boston.

The butcher instantly agreed to my terms, consented to bunk forward with the crew, and went ashore to fetch his baggage. In two or three hours he returned, bringing his effects in a cart. They consisted of a large trunk, a small trunk, a square, leather-covered box, two long oblong boxes, a package wrapped in an oil-skin cloth, and a market-basket, the cover of which being slightly raised I saw to be full of boots and shoes. Besides these he carried in his hand a cage containing a sandpiper, with one wing carefully bandaged to its body.

"It looks like a good deal of baggage," he said to

me, "just for a trip to Boston. But it is n't only to Boston that I want to go. I 've set out to travel just as long as I can keep it up. I 've sold my horse and wagon, and what 's here is all the property I have, and wherever I go I take it with me. As for this bird," he said, "I saw him on the beach with a broken wing, and I caught him, and now I 'm tryin' to cure him up. When animals is too small to butcher, I 'm fond of 'em."

And thereupon, assisted by his carter, he carried his property below.

Doris and I were getting very impatient to start on our voyage, but there seemed to be no end of delays, the principal of which was connected with the shipment of stones — cobble-stones of varied sizes. As the *Merry Chanter* could ship no cargo at Mooseley, for the reason that there was nothing there to ship, it was necessary that she should go to Boston in ballast, and these stones were her ballast.

"They are filling it up from one end to the other!" cried Doris. "I never saw anything like it! This waiting for bread and getting stones is more than I counted on, Captain Timon," she cried. "If there are so many barnacles on the ship I should think they would serve for ballast."

The skipper shook his head. "It won't do to trust to barnacles," he said, "though I don't doubt there 's a good many of 'em. But don't be afraid, ma'am. We 'll get her off before you know it."

It was on the morning of a Wednesday, the third of June, that Captain Timon came to us rubbing his hands and declared that the *Merry Chanter* was ready

to sail. He called the ship the *Chanter*, but that was an abbreviation my wife and I never allowed ourselves to adopt.

"Hurrah!" cried Doris, before I could find words to express my satisfaction. "And now, dear Captain, let every sail be set, and hoist our ensign to the topmost peak."

A smile came over the face of the good skipper. "I guess we won't set every sail," said he. "They won't be needed with this wind; an' as to ensign, I don't know as we 've got one aboard."

"That is too bad!" said Doris. "As soon as we are fairly off I 'll go to work and make one myself."

Everything being now all ready, and Captain Timon having done everything that should be done for a schooner clearing for Boston, we hoisted anchor; that is to say, we cast off the cables which for so long had held the *Merry Chanter* to Cantling's wharf.

It seemed to me as if the whole town had turned out to see us off and to help us get off. More willing hands than were really necessary helped the captains to hoist the foresail, the mainsail, and two jibs; and when this had been done the owners of the willing hands scuttled down into their boats, made fast to a line from the *Merry Chanter*, and vigorously pulled her bows around so that she might take the wind.

It was a long time before her bow got around or she took the wind; but Doris and I and the butcher scarcely noticed this, so busy were we waving our handkerchiefs, and shouting good-byes to the women, the children, and the old men on the wharf, who in return waved their handkerchiefs, their hands, or

their hats to us, wishing us a lucky voyage, fair winds, and smooth water.

At last the *Merry Chanter* was got around, the wind filled her sails, the boats cast off, and, pulling to a little distance, their occupants waved their hats and

The owner of the *Merry Chanter.*

cheered; there was a slight inclination of the deck to leeward, and our ship was under way.

It is seldom, I think, that a ship goes to sea with a crew composed entirely of captains, but the consideration of the fact gave us great comfort. Here were men with long lives of experience. Whatever might

happen, they would know exactly what to do. These noble seamen had been from pole to pole; they had known the desolation of the icy north; they had sailed through the furious typhoons of the tropics; and with sound ships, or ships with battered sides, they had dashed in safety through maddened waves from port to port. And not only the best of good seamanship, but the best of good luck, we carried with us. In all his life Captain Cyrus had never had anything serious happen to his ships; and why should he begin now? It was especially consoling to me, as I looked at my lovely wife, to think of these things at the outset of our wedding trip.

Not only seamen of vast experience, but able and lively seamen, were our captains. No one could imagine that years hung heavy upon them. Captain Timon stood at the helm with the bold, bright eye of an old sea-king. Captain Garnish, acting as mate, strode tall and strong along the deck, looking up at the sails and rigging with the air of a man who knew exactly what each inch of canvas, each stick of timber, and each piece of cordage should at that moment be doing, and ready, if he saw the least thing amiss, to roar out condemnation.

Captain Teel had assumed the duties of cook, and was now shut up in the galley; but Captain Cyrus, as lively as a squirrel, and still wearing his embroidered velvet slippers, was here, there, and everywhere, stowing away this, coiling up that, and making things, in general, ship-shape, and always with a pleasant grin upon his face, as if it were all an old story to him and he liked it.

Doris ran forward to see how the Merry Chanter himself was getting on, and I followed. We leaned over the bulwarks of the bow and looked at him. There he stood, part of his right arm still extended, his head thrown back, and his long hair appearing ready to float in the breeze, while his open mouth seemed drinking in the fresh salt air.

"Look at him!" cried Doris. "He is all ready for the tossing waves, the roaring gale, and the brave sea song. How grand it must be to stand there with nothing but the sea before him, catching everything first, and afraid of nothing!"

Seizing my hands, Doris danced away with me over an almost level deck. "Is n't this grand?" she said. "And treading our own deck! Let's pipe all hands to grog!"

I entered into the enthusiasm, but demurred to the grog-piping.

On the opposite side of the deck walked up and down the butcher, clad in an immaculately clean white gown of the kind peculiar to his trade, and worn probably with the idea of keeping the dust off his clothes.

"How do you like the sea?" asked Doris as we passed.

"I think I shall like it when we get there," said the butcher.

"Get there?" she exclaimed. "Don't you call this the sea?"

"No," said he, "this is Mooseley harbor. When we get around that point, two miles from here, then we are really out to sea."

Captain Teel now appeared and informed us that dinner was ready. It had been decided that the butcher, as a passenger, should mess with us. Cap-

"'Look at him!' cried Doris."

tain Timon was also to be one of our company, but he declined to leave the wheel for the present.

The butcher appeared at the table in a neat suit of new clothes, having removed his gown. He was, in-

deed, a very tidy and proper-looking fellow. As he was used to that sort of thing, I invited him to carve.

"No, sir," said he quietly, but with decision; "I have shut the shop door behind me."

We had fine sea appetites for our meal, but Doris ate hurriedly. "I 'm so afraid we 'll pass around the point while I am down here," she said. "I would n't for the world miss our actual passage out upon the bosom of Mother Ocean!"

When we ran on deck we looked about and beheld the point still ahead of us.

"Why, Captain Timon," said Doris, "have we sailed at all?"

"Oh, yes," he said cheerily; "we 're gettin' on, we 're gettin' on. We have n't lost no headway so fur. This wind 'll freshen before long, and then you 'll see." And, leaving the helm in care of Captain Garnish, he went below.

Whether the wind fell off instead of freshening, or whether, as Doris surmised, we had become accidentally anchored, we certainly made but little progress, and there were times when it seemed as if the distant point were actually becoming more distant.

As there was no probability of an immediate rush out upon Mother Ocean, we went below to look over our little stock of literature; and while so engaged we heard a great sound of flapping and banging upon deck. Hurrying up, we found that the sails were loosely swinging and hanging, and that the crew, assisted by Captain Timon, were engaged in pulling them down.

"What is the matter?" we cried.

"Nothin' is the matter," replied Captain Cyrus, cheerily. "We're goin' to fish."

Doris sat down on something. "Fish!" she gasped.

Captain Timon now came towards us. "You see," said he, "it ain't no use tryin' to make headway against this flood tide; an' so we thought we 'd a great sight better anchor and fish. The fish 'll be comin' in lively with the flood. The tide will turn about six o'clock, an' then we can go out on the ebb an' pass the p'int in just the prettiest time of the evenin'. An' if you want to fish, there 's lines enough on board for everybody."

For some minutes we were disgusted to the point of not being able to say how disgusted we were. Then Doris, seeing the captains gathered at the stern all busy in preparing their lines, sprung to her feet and declared that she might as well make the best of it, and that she was going to fish.

Captain Cyrus took charge of her, baiting her hook, and cheerily giving her all needful help and advice. As for me, I did not care to fish; and as for the butcher, he did not care to fish; and, together, we walked forward.

"It 's my opinion," said he, confidentially, "that this is a stone ship. I 'll lay two to one there 's barnacles on her like the foundation walls of a church, and inside they 've loaded her up with stone enough for a monument. If she ever sticks fast on a bar she 'll be solid enough to build a lighthouse on."

"You don't seem to have faith in the sailing qualities of our ship," said I. "You must be sorry you took passage with us."

"Oh, no," said he. "I 've come on board with all my belongin's, and I intend to stick to her as long as anybody else does. Stone ship, or wooden ship, I don't go back on my bargain."

The *Merry Chanter* was lying two or three miles from Mooseley and about a mile and a half from the point. The wind and tide together had swung her around so that she lay almost broadside to the distant town. Looking in that direction we saw, far away, a little boat.

The butcher gazed a few moments in silence, and then he said: "There 's a skiff comin' after us from town. Perhaps they think somethin' 's happened. I 'll go down and get one of the spy-glasses and see who it is."

When he returned with the glass he leveled it at the boat. For a few moments he gazed, and then he said, forcibly, but in an undertone, "I 'll be knocked in the head if that is n't Captain Cyrus's wife!"

"What do you suppose she wants?" I asked. "Why does she come?"

"No man can tell you that," he answered. "She hates sea air, and won't live with him. But since I 've been in these parts she 's come down four times to see him, and every time he has been away on a fishin' cruise or somethin'. You know Captain Cyrus goes for the luckiest man in the world. But, my conscience! she made it hot for the neighbors when she saw the way his house was kept. And now she 's found him off again; but bein' anchored, she 's come after us. I 'll go and report to the skipper."

So saying, he walked aft, and taking Captain Timon

aside, he stated what he had seen. I followed, and I perceived that this intelligence had a wonderful effect upon our skipper.

"Don't say a word to Captain Cyrus," he whispered to us. "We must get out of this in no time." And, without a moment's delay, he piped all hands to haul up fishing-lines, weigh anchor, hoist sail, and get under way.

In these hurried preparations I did what I could to help; and the butcher looked as if he would like to follow my example, but was restrained by the proprieties of his position as a passenger.

"If there 's any danger of that boat catchin' up," said he, "I 'll lay hold and work like a good fellow; for her comin' aboard will be worse than a ship afire."

The skipper was at the wheel. "We 're goin' to run her before the wind," he said, "an' we won't try to double the p'int. That land off there makin' the sou'-west line of our harbor is an island, an' there 's an inlet between it and the mainland that we can run through. Wind and tide will favor us, an' I reckon we can get away; an' Captain Cyrus won't never know nuthin' about it. That boat can't pull across the bay after us; she 's huggin' the shore now on account of the tide. Them 's two colored men that 's been waiters at a hotel that 's pullin' her. There ain't a man belongin' to our town that would get out his boat to take Captain Cyrus's wife after him."

"But will not Captain Cyrus suspect something from your sudden change of plans?" I asked.

"He knows the fish would n't bite," said the skipper, "an' that ought to be reason enough."

The situation had been explained to Doris, and she was wildly anxious to have every stitch of canvas crowded upon the *Merry Chanter* that she might speed across the bay, and away from that little boat.

"What she wants is to come aboard," said Doris, "and we can't have a woman like that on the *Merry Chanter*. If she wants to scold her husband let her wait until he gets home. It is n't far to Boston and back."

Captain Timon smiled at this remark. "We 're not on a straight line for Boston just now, but if we try to double that p'int she 'll catch us sure."

"Then let us forget there is a point," said Doris, who in this matter was exactly of my opinion.

It did not seem the *Merry Chanter's* habit to dash through the water, but with a good wind behind her and a tide more in her favor than against her she sailed across the bay at a rate considerably greater than that of a boat rowed by two inexperienced oarsmen. When the little boat saw what we were about it left the shore and steered as if to cut us off. But it was easy to see that the tide was carrying it back towards the town.

The tide also carried us in a somewhat retrograde direction, but by the aid of the wind we laid a straight course for the inlet of which Captain Timon had spoken.

Captain Cyrus was kept busy forward and suspected nothing of his pursuit by the little boat.

"She has about gi'n up the chase," said Captain Timon, looking back at the boat. "Them fellows can't catch a schooner sailing afore the wind, an' I

don't believe they want to try much nuther. We was at anchor when they put out from town."

I had known oarsmen who, I thought, would be able to catch that schooner even were she sailing before the wind.

In about two hours we reached the inlet, and Doris and I were surprised to find how narrow it was. It was like a small river.

"Do large ships often go through here?" I asked of the skipper.

"'T ain't common," said he, "but me an' the other cap'ns knows every inch of this inlet and every stage of the tide, an' you can rest sure there 'll always be a foot of water between her keel an' the bottom."

The inlet, we were told, was three miles long and opened into Shankashank Bay. For a great part of this distance the incoming tide carried us through, and when we met the flood from the bay the inlet had widened, so that we were enabled to take advantage of the wind for the rest of the way.

It was nearly dark when we emerged into Shankashank Bay, but we could see well enough to judge that it was a large expanse of water.

"We may as well anchor here," said the captain, "an' make ourselves comfortable for the night. Even if she can get anybody to row her, it 's not likely she can come through that inlet after us. The tide runs in at both ends of it, an' meets in the middle, an' unless she strikes it just at high tide or low tide she 'll find a reg'lar mill-race ag'in' her fur half the way, no matter whether it is flood or ebb."

The captains were all busy anchoring the schooner and getting down the sails when the butcher came up the companion-way and beckoned me apart.

"Look here!" said he,—and I noticed that he appeared somewhat agitated,—"do you know that there is a stowaway aboard?"

"A what?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, there is," he continued; "a regular one. I was down below where it was pretty dark, bein' only one lantern, when I heard a voice comin' from I did n't know where, and sayin', 'Butcher, ahoy!' I give a jump and looked about lively, I can tell you. And directly I saw a straw hat a-stickin' up from the edge of a hatchway. 'Look you, butcher,' says some one under the hat, 'can't you get me somethin' to eat?' 'Who are you?' says I. 'I am a stowaway,' he said; 'and as you are neither a captain nor an owner, I hope I may persuade you to get me somethin' to eat, for I am very hungry. When the ship is fairly out to sea I will come forth, but until then I beg you will keep my secret.' Now what sort of a stowaway do you call that, sir?" asked the butcher earnestly.

"A very odd one," I answered. "What did you say to him?"

"I did n't say no more, but come right upstairs to speak to you; and he don't know whether I 've gone to get him grub or to report him to the skipper."

"Of course we ought to tell Captain Timon," said I.

"I don't know about that," said the butcher, shaking his head. "Sea captains are mighty severe on shipboard. It 's ten to one they 'd drag him out and

pitch him overboard, and it 's too dark for him to see to swim ashore. I think it will be better to give him somethin' to eat and let him stay aboard till mornin', and then we can put him ashore decently."

"But don't you think it will be dangerous to have such a man on board during the night?"

"You need n't be afraid of him," he said. "I 've brought my butcher tools along. And, what 's more, that fellow ain't got no call to come out. What he wants is to keep shady."

We talked a little more on the subject, and I then agreed that the butcher should give the stowaway something to eat, and that nothing should be said to the captains or to my wife until the morning.

I was ill at ease, however, and did not sleep well that night. After tossing about a good deal, I quietly arose and peeped out of the cabin door. By the dim light of the lantern I saw, not far away, the butcher, sitting on a chest. His arms were folded; his eyes were open, gazing thoughtfully into the surrounding darkness; and by his side lay a bright and heavy butcher's cleaver.

He did not see me; and I softly closed the door, got into my berth, and fell into a sound sleep.

V

THE STOWAWAY

HEN, early in the morning, after our first night on board the *Merry Chanter*, I met the butcher, I did not mention to him that I had discovered him standing, or rather sitting, guard before our cabin. I believed that the sentiments which prompted him to this delicate attention should be respected.

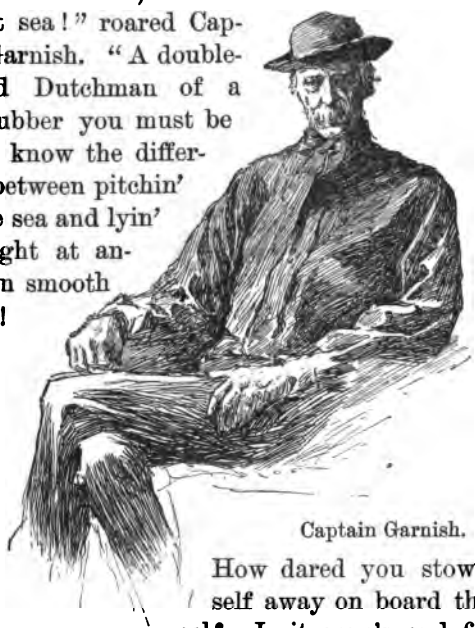
"Well," said I, "did everything go on all right in the night?"

"All right," he answered. "I have just peeped down the hatchway, and I caught sight of his straw hat. I guess the rest of him is there. And, if you say so, we 'll let him stay till after breakfast."

An hour later, when the captain and Doris were informed that there was a stowaway in the hold, there was great excitement on board the schooner. All thoughts of weighing anchor and setting sail were abandoned for the time. Every soul on the vessel repaired to the hatchway. Even Doris pressed as near the edge as I would allow. The stowaway was bidden to come forth, and almost immediately he scrambled up among us. The light was not very good between decks, and we could only see that he was a man of medium height and of spare build.

With Captain Timon on the one side of him, and Captain Garnish on the other, the stowaway was marched to the upper deck. This unauthorized passenger was seen to possess an intelligent face and a very rusty suit of clothes. Glancing rapidly around him, he exclaimed, "We are not at sea!"

"At sea!" roared Captain Garnish. "A double-headed Dutchman of a land-lubber you must be not to know the difference between pitchin' on the sea and lyin' all night at anchor in smooth water!



Captain Garnish.

How dared you stow yourself away on board this vessel? Is it rope's end first, or simple chuck over the side?" he said, turning to the skipper.

"We won't be too hard on him," said Captain Timon. "Perhaps the man can't swim."

"He ain't done no harm," said Captain Cyrus. "Let's let him off easy and set him ashore in a boat."

Captain Teel shook his head. "It won't do," he said, "to offer prizes for that sort of thing."

"Prizes!" cried Captain Garnish, who was evidently a man of high temper, with a strong way of doing and putting things. "I'd prize him! I'd—"

Doris now spoke up. "None of those things shall be done to him," she said, "until he tells his story. Please, sir, will you tell us your story?"

The man had a pair of plaintive eyes, and he fixed them upon Doris. "I am a schoolmaster," he said. "For nearly a year I have been teaching at West Imbury."

Each of the captains now put his head a little forward, and listened with great attention.

"I stood it as long as I could," said the schoolmaster, "and then I ran away. I am not a sailor, but I thought I should like to go to sea. Anything would be better than teaching school at West Imbury."

"Did the scholars treat you badly?" asked Doris.

"Oh, no," said the schoolmaster. "I don't mind boys, I can manage them; but it was the woman I boarded with who drove me to desperation."

"Could n't you board somewhere else?" asked Doris.

"No, not at all," he answered. "She had a contract from the town to board me for two years. She was the lowest bidder. She would lose money if I went away, and she threatened me with the law. But my privations and misery were insupportable, and I fled."

"Who was the woman who had your contract?" asked Captain Cyrus.

"Please, Sir, will you tell us your story?"

"Mrs. Bodship," said the schoolmaster.

At these words each of the four captains heaved a sigh, and, involuntarily, Captain Cyrus laid his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Now that you 've put yourself square afore us," said Captain Timon, "I don't know as we 've got much to say ag'in you; but you ought to have come aboard square an' honest, instead of stowin' away."

"I was told," said the schoolmaster, "that you did not want any hands, and I could not stay on shore a moment longer."

"Do you wish to go to Boston?" asked Doris.

"I will go anywhere," said the schoolmaster. "I will do anything, if only you will let me stay with you."

The captains now retired and talked together, while Doris and I had some further conversation with the schoolmaster. In a few minutes the captains returned.

"We have agreed," said the skipper, "that if the owners are willin' we are willin' to let him stay on board, on condition that he is not to have any part of the profits. We are all agreed that the profits ought not to be divided into any more than six parts. So that if he stays aboard he must n't do no more work than will just pay for what he eats; a bunk, not costin' anything, can be thrown in for nothin'."

This compact was quickly made, and the schoolmaster, much relieved, was taken below to breakfast.

"There ain't no need," said Captain Timon, confidentially, "fur Captain Cyrus or that schoolmaster to

know that Mrs. Bodship was tryin' to overhaul the schooner. It will just worry the captain, an' won't do the schoolmaster no good."

"Do you think Mrs. Bodship will continue her pursuit?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," said the skipper. "She 's the kind of woman that don't give up easy. But I think we 've given her the slip. She 'll be sure to think that we 've rounded this island and sailed north, for, of course, we could n't have no call to stay in Shanka-shank Bay. It 's my opinion she 's gone to Boston to be ready to meet us when we get there. She 's got a horse an' buggy, an' I calculate she 'll drive herself there."

"You don't mean," exclaimed Doris, "that she can get to Boston in a buggy sooner than we can get there in the *Merry Chanter?*"

"Yes, I do," answered Captain Timon. "She 's an awful woman with the whip. An' the reason I think she will go in her buggy is that she 'll want to call at the different ports to see if we have put into any of them for water or repairs."

"Horrible!" cried Doris. "What shall we do when we get to Boston and find her there?"

"I don't believe she 'll wait," said the skipper. "She 's a nervous woman, an' hates to wait. I guess she 'll be gone when we get there."

When the schoolmaster came on deck he had tidied himself up a little and now looked like another man. "I cannot thank you enough," he said to Doris and me, "for allowing me to remain on board of your ship. It is like beginning a new life. But I must

admit that I shall feel safer when I am out upon the open sea."

"Can you swim?" asked the butcher, who was standing near.

The schoolmaster answered that he was sorry to be obliged to say that he could not; whereupon the

The Butcher.

butcher gently whistled a few notes and gazed out over the water.

I had begun to believe that the butcher was a pessimist.

"And now, Captain," cried Doris, "let us up anchor and hoist sail. There is no reason for our stopping here any longer."

"I don't know about that," said Captain Timon, dubiously. "The tide is comin' in again, an' we 'll get out of this bay just as quick by lyin' here as by tryin' to sail ag'in that flood-tide. But if you 'd like to be movin', we can take a sail along the coast of Shankashank Bay an' have a sight of the country; an' then, when the tide turns, we can go out on the ebb."

"Oh, by all means, let us sail!" cried Doris. "Anything is better than being anchored here."

"Am I to understand, Captain," said I, "that during our voyage we are to stop every time the tide is against us?"

"Oh, no," said the skipper, with a laugh. "That 's only when we 're in these bays. We sha'n't take no account of tide when we are out to sea."

During the rest of that morning we sailed along the coast of Shankashank Bay, sometimes half a mile from the land and sometimes even less. It was a pretty shore and we enjoyed it, although we were moving south, and almost directly away from Boston. There was a good wind from the west, but we sailed slowly. We would not wish, however, to sail very fast in the wrong direction.

We passed a little scattered town, with a few fishing-boats anchored along the shore. Then we came to a bluff crowned with pine woods which extended some distance back into the interior. The country, as far as we could see along the shore, appeared marshy and thinly settled.

The captains now went forward and talked together, leaving the wheel in my hands. I had determined to

learn to steer, and to get as much nautical education as possible.

In a very few minutes Captain Timon returned. "We 've agreed," said he, "that we 'd be runnin' ag'in sense an' reason if we did n't lay to here and take in water."

"Water!" I cried. "Why, we have taken in water."

"Yes," said the skipper, "common water. But just the other side of that bluff there 's the Kilkink Spring. A tribe of Injuns used to live there just on account of that spring. There is no better water in the world, an' it 's great on keepin'. Fur a long v'yage there 's nothin' like it."

At first Doris and I were inclined to rebel, but suddenly she changed her mind. "It is true," she said, "that the water we have had to drink so far is flat and horrid, and now that we have a chance of taking in some fine spring water we ought by all means to do so. It can't keep us long."

This seemed to me a proper moment to assert myself, and to make Doris understand that I was the one who should decide questions of this sort. But upon reflection I found that I was not prepared to take such action. When I took my true position I must be fully prepared to maintain it.

In twenty minutes we were anchored about a quarter of a mile from the bluff, and after dinner a boat with two casks and two captains went ashore for water.

The schoolmaster was ill at ease. "I do not believe," said he to me, "that I can truly feel safe from Mrs. Bodship until we are actually out at sea."

The butcher walked aft to where Captain Timon

was quietly smoking his pipe. "Look here," said the butcher; "you ought to give that schoolmaster somethin' to do. He has got a mind, he has, and if you don't set his arms and legs a-goin' that mind of his will run away with him."

"I have given him somethin' to do," said the skipper, sternly. "He 's lent a hand at the capstan, an' he 's lent a hand at the sheets. That 'll pay fur his breakfast an' dinner, an' I can't give him no more work till he 's had his supper."

The butcher made no further remark to the skipper, but turning to me as I sat by with my afternoon pipe, he said: "He 's so scared that he won't stay on deck for fear that she might be driving along in her buggy and get sight of him. And if she does, he says, she 'll be bound to come aboard."

"What in the world is he afraid of?" I asked. "He must be very silly."

"He is afraid of Mrs. Bodship," said the butcher; "and if you knew Mrs. Bodship you 'd be afraid of her too, especially if she had a contract to board you. I believe that wherever that schoolmaster goes she 'd follow him and board him, so that she could send in her bill to the town." For a moment he stood in thought. "I know what I 'll do!" he exclaimed. "I 'll lend him one of my gowns to wear over his clothes. Then he can be on deck as much as he pleases, and if she does see him she won't know him unless her spectacles are a lot better than most."

Not long afterwards there appeared on deck what seemed to be a pair of butchers. Doris and I were much amused by the spectacle. But, notwithstand-

ing his garb, the schoolmaster did not look the butcher. His gait, his bearing, were not those of a genuine slicer of meat and cleaver of bones. Still, he was disguised sufficiently to deceive any Mrs. Bodship who might be traveling on shore.

The butcher's efforts on behalf of the schoolmaster's peace of mind did not end here. After a few turns up and down the deck in deep reflection he came aft, bringing with him the cage which contained the wounded sandpiper.

"Look here," said he to the schoolmaster, "I wish you 'd run this bird while you 're aboard. I 'm not such an hour-and-minute man as you are, and sometimes I forget him."

The schoolmaster took the cage and looked inquiringly at the other.

"Now," said the butcher, "there 's a good deal to occupy the mind in running a sandpiper in a cage, especially if he 's got a broken wing. I laid out to cure that wing, but I guess you can do it a great deal better than I could, if you give your mind to it. What he wants is plenty of mutton tallow, and a cage kept as clean as a hospital ward."

When the two casks and Captain Teel and Captain Garnish returned in the boat, the schoolmaster, with a piece of sail-cloth tied in front of him to protect his butcher's gown, was busily engaged in cleaning the sandpiper's cage. Captain Garnish stepped up to him with an angry glare upon his face.

"Look here," he said, "that 's ag'in contract. We did n't take you aboard this schooner to work except meal stints, an' no more."

The schoolmaster looked up at the angry captain, but before he could reply the butcher broke in. "Now, then, cap'n," said he, "this sandpiper business is a private job between me and the schoolmaster. What he gets and what he don't get is his business and mine. The sandpiper has n't got anything to do with the ship, and he could be run ashore just as well as he is run here."

The severity on Captain Garnish's countenance began to fade. "Very well," said he; "if it 's private I 've nothin' to say. But there 's no claims fur work to be brought ag'in the profits."

VI

THE MAN ON THE HILL

ORIS and I were amazed at the slow progress made by the captains in supplying the *Merry Chanter* with pure water from the celebrated Kilkink Spring. The boat went out again, this time with the skipper and Captain Teel, and their trip was a longer one than that of the two other captains. At the end of the third trip evening began to fall, and Captain Timon said it would be of no use to try to get any more water that day.

"Any more?" cried Doris. "Surely we have enough by this time!"

The skipper smiled and shook his head. "Not fur a sea v'yage," he said. "When you once get out to sea there 's no gettin' in fresh water. You see we 've throwed out all we took in at Mooseley, because you said that it did n't agree with you. We don't want to make our owners sick, you know."

"I wish I had never mentioned the water," said Doris, marching away.

The next morning the process of taking in the water began again; but there was no use fretting

about this, Captain Timon remarked, for the tide was coming in again and we ought to be glad that we had something useful to do while we were obliged to wait.

Restless and impatient, and tired of walking up and down the deck of our anchored vessel, Doris and I went ashore on the second trip of the boat, thinking a country walk might quiet our minds. The butcher had already been landed; but we could not induce the schoolmaster to leave the ship. We left him anointing and bandaging the wounded wing of the sandpiper.

Doris would not leave until the skipper had assured her that our going on shore would not interfere with the sailing of the *Merry Chanter* when the proper time came. Captain Timon said he would fire a gun —he had a musket on board—two hours before he weighed anchor, and as this would certainly give us plenty of time to return to the ship, we went ashore with easy hearts.

The country which lay between the bluff and the little town was slightly rolling; wiry grass growing thinly in the sandy soil, with a few bushes here and there. At some distance, on the top of a little rounded hill, we saw the butcher, apparently admiring the landscape. As we walked in his direction, desiring to know if anything could be seen from the top of that hill, he came down to meet us.

"Do you know," he said, as soon as he was near enough, "if that schoolmaster was attendin' to my sandpiper?"

We assured him that we had left the pedagogue giving careful attention to the unfortunate bird.

"I am glad of that," he said, his countenance assuming an expression of relief. "He ought to keep himself occupied, and the captains won't let him do no more for the ship than just exactly so much. I was afraid he might get tired stayin' there doin' nothin' and might come ashore. And it would be pretty rough on him if she were to nab him before he 'd got to fairly feelin' at home on the ship."

"What were you looking at from that hill?" asked Doris, who was anxious to go on.

"I was looking for Mrs. Bodship," said he. "If I 'd seen her driving this way in her buggy I 'd been on board in no time, and had that schoolmaster stowed away among the ballast; and if he 'd heaved some of it at her when she come down to look for him I would n't have blamed him, though, of course, Captain Cyrus's feelings must be taken into account when it comes to that."

"I think you are entirely too much afraid of Mrs. Bodship," said I.

"Well, she has n't come along yet," said the butcher. "But on the top of that hill there is a man that I 've had my eye on for pretty nigh an hour. In the whole of that time I don't believe he 's taken his eyes off the ship. I have an idea that he has got a contract to spy for Mrs. Bodship."

"Let us go straight over there and speak to him," said Doris. "No man has a right to spy on the *Merry Chanter*."

Doris spoke so quickly that I had no time to propose this myself, but we instantly started for the distant man.

"Let me go first," said the butcher. "He may have a club or a knife about him."

Whether or not the butcher had his cleaver in one of his pockets I could not tell, but he walked bravely on.

The man on the hill did not seem at all disturbed by our approach. On the contrary, he came to meet us, as the butcher had done. He was a middle-sized man, somewhat inclined to stoutness, but very quick and springy in his gait. His face was plump and ruddy, smooth shaven except a pair of sandy side-whiskers, and he had pleasant blue eyes. Without doubt he was an Englishman.

"Good morning to you," he said, raising his hat. "Now I dare say you belong to that ship."

I informed him that my wife and I owned the vessel.

"Really!" he exclaimed. "Now tell me where are you bound to?"

"To Boston," I replied.

"The very thing!" he exclaimed. "Boston is in the North somewhere, now, is n't it? I 'm an English traveler, but I don't like your long railway carriages. In England we 'd use them for bridges. I came to this place in a wagon, but it is broken to smash down there in that village. Now, I should like, of all things, to take a sail along the coast; I don't care whether it is to Boston or Salt Lake City. Now, tell me, will you book me as a passenger? It is a trading vessel, is n't it?"

Doris and I consulted apart. "I have an idea," said she, "that it is not impossible we might make

more money carrying passengers than freight. He seems like an honest, straightforward man. Why should n't we take him to Boston?"

We returned and told the man that we were making a regular commercial cruise to Boston, and that if he was in no hurry to get there we would take him as a passenger.

"Good!" he cried; "I 'll go. I am in no hurry, you know. But you are positively sure now that you are not going to cross the Atlantic?"

So far the butcher had not spoken, nor did he speak now; but the spasm of resigned pessimism which seemed to run through his frame, heaving his chest and gently upturning his eyes, indicated quite plainly his opinion of the *Merry Chanter's* crossing the Atlantic.

Having assured the Englishman that our trade was entirely coastwise, he declared he would go instantly to the town, fetch his luggage, and be on board in no time. In fact, when we had finished our ramble and were about to enter the boat which Captain Teel had rowed over to take us back to dinner, we saw our passenger rapidly striding over the hills bearing an immense portmanteau in one hand and in the other a hat-box, a bundle of umbrellas and canes, besides various other packages. He shouted to us to wait for him, and we took him on board with us.

The captains did not object in the least to our new passenger. "Summer tenants an' boarders," said Captain Timon, "an' sailin' parties long and short, has got ten times more money in 'em than fish an' crops, or the flour trade either, for that matter. I go

"'I am Lord Crabstairs,' he said."

in fur pickin' up passengers all along the coast if we can get 'em."

"Always being careful," said Doris, in an undertone, "not to pick up a Bodship." At which Captain Timon gave a sympathetic grin.

After dinner Doris said to me, "We ought to have a book in which to put down the names of our passengers." Accordingly I made one of several sheets of paper. We entered first the name of the butcher, and then I was about to write that of the schoolmaster, but Doris objected.

"We ought to have another page for a free list," she said, "and put him on that."

When this had been arranged we went on deck to inquire the name of our new passenger. We found him sitting on a coil of rope, smoking a black wooden pipe and talking gaily to the butcher, the schoolmaster, and three of the captains.

"What is your name, sir?" said I, approaching with my book in my hand.

He took his pipe from his mouth in deference to the presence of my wife. "I am Lord Crabstairs," he said.

I happened to be looking at the butcher at this moment, and saw him suddenly turn upon his heel and disappear below. In an instant he returned. His arms were folded upon his chest, but I could see beneath his white gown the distinct outlines of a cleaver. He stepped close to me.

"Maniacy is a thing," he whispered, "which cannot be allowed on shipboard."

"You may think it a little odd," said the new pas-

senger, looking about on the various degrees of surprise and amazement expressed upon the countenances of the company, "that a member of the Upper House should be neglecting his parliamentary duties and taking passage with you for Boston, where he has n't the least business in the world, you know. But when I have told you my story you won't think it so beastly odd, after all."

"Story?" cried Doris. "Let everybody sit down and listen."

And everybody did; Captain Teel being brought post-haste from the cook's galley.

VII

LORD CRABSTAIRS

"IN the first place," said Doris, "do you really mean to say that you are truly an English lord — a peer of the realm?"

"I do really and truly mean to say that," answered the passenger, his blue eyes gleaming with as much of an honest glow as was ever seen in eyes. "I am Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree, Warwickshire. The family estates once covered, I am told, ten thousand acres."

The butcher listened with interest. "Cattle?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said the other; "I don't care for cattle. What I like is poultry. Just before I left England I had the finest lot of poultry you ever saw — all blooded, with pedigrees. And bees, twenty-seven hives of bees, and each one with its name painted on it in a different color from the rest — 'Daisy,' 'Clover,' 'Daffodil,' and so on. The bees could n't read the names, you know, but each one knew his hive by the color of the letters."

"This is the first time I ever heard," said Captain Garnish, "that there was twenty-seven colors."

"Oh, bless you!" cried the Englishman, "it is easy enough to manage that. On one hive the letters were all red, and on another they were all blue, and on another half were red and half blue, and so on. In that way I made the colors go round, you know."

"You ought to have painted your bees," remarked Captain Timon, "and then there could n't have been no mistake. If you saw a red bee goin' into a blue hive you could have picked him up and put him into the right hole."

"No need of that, no need of that!" cried the Englishman. "The bees attend to that. They kill them if they make a mistake, you know. And there are lots of other things I like, such as flower-beds and a kitchen garden. Nothing sets me up, you know, like working in the kitchen garden. And a cow. Every morning I curried and brushed my cow until she shone like a sealskin. That cow knew me like a brother. If she happened to be out of sight in the copse, all I had to do was to drum on the bottom of a tin pail, and she would come running to be milked and to get her bit of cabbage leaf."

The company looked wonderingly at one another. Was this the usual way of life with British peers?

"When all that happened," continued the speaker, "I was the happiest man in the United Kingdom. Forty years old, sound of wind and limb, no wife nor child nor any one depending on me, a nice little house in the prettiest part of Bucks County, with a great copper beech in front of my door that the earl himself would have given a thousand pounds

for if it could have been taken up and planted in his park, with a little green as smooth as velvet where I used to feed my fowls, and the brightest flower-beds and the earliest peas within twelve miles of Aylesbury. I have a little income from my mother's family, and that kept things going, and from break of day till ten o'clock at night there could n't be a jollier fellow than I was.

"Well, madam, and all of you, it was on a beautiful morning this spring, with the grass greener and more flowers in blossom and the peas more forward than I had ever known them before at that time of year, not to speak of a little calf as like to her mother as two pins of different sizes, when I was sitting in front of my cottage in the shade of the beech, with my morning pipe and mug of ale, that there came to me two men,— attorneys they were from London, who had driven over from the railway station in a dog-cart,— and they lost no time in saying that their errand was to inform me that by the death of the late lamented Godfrey, Lord Crabstairs, I was now Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree.

"As you may well imagine, I jumped up in a rage at hearing this. 'None of your lies!' I cried. 'Lord Godfrey may be dead or he may not be dead, but whichever he is, he has a son and a grandson, legal issue. You need not suppose that I have not kept my eye on all that.' 'That may be,' said the speaking attorney; 'but your eye did n't keep the son from falling overboard from a collier in the Mersey, and his infant son from dying two weeks ago of cholera

infantum, without issue. Whereupon, by the death of old Lord Godfrey yesterday morning, you are Lord Crabstairs and no mistake.'

"Now then," said the Englishman, looking briskly around at his auditors, "I was so angry that I was ready to knock down those two men right and left. But in England it does not do to lay hands on law folk. I was well up in this Crabstairs succession, you know. I had studied it all my life, and with two good lives between me and the title I felt safe. But how could any man imagine that such beastly luck was coming to him! You see the Crabstairs have been loaded with an inherited debt for a long, long time back, and for a hundred and fifty years there has not been a lord of the estate who has lived at Haviltree. Every man-jack of them, as soon as he came into the title, was clapped into jail for debt. There was no getting out of it except by running away; which some of them did.

"The inherited debt, you know, was bigger than any Crabstairs could pay. The second son of old Lord Godfrey took time by the forelock and ran away to the Philippine Islands, where he married a native wife and brought up a large family. But he never had anything but a heathen marriage, for fear that his elder brother might die without issue and misery might come upon his wife's children."

"That was true Christianity," said Captain Teel, solemnly.

"'Now,' said the speaking attorney to me, 'my lord,' said he — 'Don't my lord me!' I shouted. 'I renounce the title! I have nothing to do with these

Crabstairs! I am eleven removes from the main line.' 'You can't renounce the title, my lord,' said he. 'You are the heir-at-law, and there is no getting out of it.' Now the second attorney, who had n't said anything so far, spoke up. He took a paper out of his pocket. 'Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree, Warwickshire,' said he, 'I arrest you for debt in the amount of two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence ha'penny. And we brought over a constable in the dog-cart, so the easier you make things the better.'

"On hearing this I hurled my pint pot at one attorney and my pipe at the other, and making a dash at the beehives which stood near by, I kicked over a dozen of them. A black cloud of savage stingers came howling out, and as I sprang away — not one of them after me, for they knew their master — I heard behind me such a cursing and swearing and screaming as nearly split my ears. I darted into the garden, through the pea-patch, and over the back fence, and made across country, at a pace those law people could n't think of keeping up, to the railway station. I caught a train, went to town, drew all my little income that was due, and took passage for America.

"And here I am, knowing nothing in the world of what has become of my dear home, my cow and my calf, of my flower-beds and my kitchen garden, of my beautiful flock of poultry, or of the bees and the attorneys. I have left everything behind me; but there is one thought that makes up for a lot of what has happened, and that is that for the first time

in many a long year there is no Lord Crabstairs in jail for debt. And what is more," he said, rising to his feet, and his blue eyes sparkling with honest indignation, "there never will be, so long as I am alive!"

At this Captain Garnish came forward and shook the Englishman by the hand, and his example was immediately followed by the other captains and by the schoolmaster.

"I can feel for you," said the latter, "as one who flees from tyranny. May you never be overtaken!"

The butcher did not shake hands. That was not his way. He stood up very straight and said: "May I be chopped and sawed, bone-drawed and skewered, if I'd live in a country where a man can be made a lord without his having a word to say about it! If I found myself in that fix, sir, debt or no debt, jail or no jail, I'd cut and run! I say you did the square thing, sir!"

"Do you intend," asked Doris, who had listened with eager earnestness to the Englishman's story, "to continue to call yourself Lord Crabstairs?"

"Of course I do," said the other. "That is my name, and I shall not disown it. I don't wish to sail under false colors; and more than that, so long as it is known that I am alive and holding the title they can't nab any other poor fellow, perhaps with a family."

"Very good," said Doris; "we understand your case perfectly. And now," she continued, turning to Captain Timon, "let us set sail."

VIII

DOLOR TRIPP

UT Captain Timon was not yet ready to set sail. The business of water-carrying had not gone on in the afternoon, for the reason that the spring had become muddy by much dipping and required some time in which to settle and purify itself. Two casks had been left there, so it was absolutely necessary that a boat should go after them, and it was now too late in the day to make an advantageous trip.

I think Doris's impatience would have proved beyond her control had not she become interested in a plan proposed by Lord Crabstairs. That nobleman was of an exceedingly lively and practical disposition, and took a great interest in his contemplated sea voyage to Boston. He had come into this part of the country without other aim than to escape cities, which he hated; and he would not now be going to Boston but for the opportunity of going by sea. He was very fond of the sea, and when he had seen our anchored ship he had been fascinated by the idea of sailing somewhere in her.

His desire now was to plunge boldly into sailor life, to pull on ropes, to climb the masthead, and all that sort of thing, and he had been very much taken aback when the schoolmaster informed him that nothing of the kind would be allowed.

"If you pay your passage," said the schoolmaster, "they will not let you do any work at all; and if you sail gratis, so to speak, you can only do enough to pay for your meals."

The prospect of sailing without occupation appeared dull to Lord Crabstairs, nor did the offer of the schoolmaster sometimes to allow him to attend to the sandpiper promise much relief. But his mind was as quick and active as his body.

"By George!" he cried, "I don't care for birds like that; but I will keep poultry. Fresh eggs every morning, and roast fowl for dinner. I will go on shore at daybreak to-morrow and buy some."

The butcher here remarked that if fowls were to be killed he would furnish the tools, but that was all he would do, as he had gone out of that business.

Our detentions in port had had the effect of making Doris feel the need of occupation, and she gladly welcomed the poultry scheme. Of course there would not be time on the voyage to hatch out little chickens; but she determined, if it were possible, to purchase for herself a hen with a young brood.

The discussion regarding this new scheme proved interesting, and the captains gave their full consent. The enthusiastic nobleman went so far as to suggest the purchase of a few hives of bees, but this proposal met with no favor. A cow was spoken of, but here

the butcher vehemently objected. The time might come, he said, when she would have to be slaughtered, and he vowed he would not sail in company with a cow that might have to be slaughtered.

The first thing I saw when I cast my eyes landward the next morning was Lord Crabstairs hurrying over the hillocks towards the shore, and carrying a pair of full-grown fowls with each hand. He had rowed himself ashore, and now returned with his prizes.

"There they are!" he cried, as soon as he reached the deck. "Three hens and a cock! That was all the woman would sell, but she said we might get young chicks at a house about a mile farther inland. I will go there directly I 've eaten breakfast. And now what are we to do with them? Of course it won't do to put up a high fence all around the deck. But I dare say they know as well as we do that they can't swim, and so will not jump overboard. Anyway, here goes to see what will happen." And he cut the cords which bound their legs.

Instantly the four fowls began to rush madly here and there, screaming and fluttering their wings. The cock flew half way up one of the shrouds of the mainmast, and sat there crowing and evidently highly excited, while the three hens went screaming down the open hatchway on the forward deck, and then after some wild careering flew down another hatchway into the hold among the ballast.

"That will do very well," said Lord Crabstairs. "I will throw them down some bread, and there they can stay until we have mustered the rest of the

flock. As for the cock, if he likes rope ladders, he is welcome to stop there for the present."

"It is a good thing he is not an egg layer," said the schoolmaster.

After breakfast Lord Crabstairs, accompanied by Doris, who wished to select her own brood, and by myself and the butcher, went on shore on an expedition after poultry.

The house to which we directed our steps was about a mile and a half from our landing-place, and when we had approached near enough to get a good view of it we found it to be a dark, somber building without a tree near it except a great pine, which grew so close to one corner that it seemed like a part of the house. As we drew nearer, Doris remarked that it looked more like a prison than a farm-house.

At this Lord Crabstairs laughed loud, and said he hoped we should not find it full of jail-birds, as those were not the ornithological specimens we were after.

As we drew nearer, the resemblance to a prison increased. A high pale fence surrounded the house yard, and we could see that there were iron bars to the windows. The narrow gate which opened upon the road was locked, but a man was at work inside, and he came and opened it. When we told him our errand he at first hesitated, and then said we must go and ask at the house.

In a body we went up a grass-grown brick path to the front door, where we knocked. A more dreary looking house I never stood before. The building itself had a certain air of importance, but the sur-

rounding grounds did not accord with any such air. They were flat, bare, and covered with scrubby grass; not a flower-bed nor border, nor even a rose bush. The thin grass which covered the house yard had recently been cut, and the man was now raking it into meager little piles of hay. A few out-buildings at a short distance were separated from this yard by a high fence and a gate. The building itself was destitute of any attempt at ornament, not having even a piazza.

After we had waited some minutes the door was opened as far as a stout chain would allow, and the form of a tall woman appeared at the aperture. She wore a black-and-white striped sunbonnet. We saw more of this sunbonnet than of her face.

Doris stepped forward and stated our errand. The woman listened, and then, remarking that she would see, shut the door with a bang.

"Polite, that!" said Lord Crabstairs. "I dare say she is a female convict."

The door was not opened again, but presently there came around the corner another woman, also wearing a black-and-white sunbonnet; but she was shorter and had a pleasanter voice than the other.

"If it 's chickens you want," she said, "you can come this way. We have some to sell." She led the way through a gate to a poultry-yard, where she showed us a variety of fowls, not one of which, Lord Crabstairs declared, possessed a single drop of pure blood. He selected, however, a half-dozen of the best specimens, and Doris bought a hen with nine little chicks, together with the coop, which, with

its occupants, the butcher and I undertook to carry to the boat.

While we were engaged in making our purchases another woman came out to the chicken-yard. She also wore a black-and-white sunbonnet, but she was younger than the two others, and her face was quite pretty. Her countenance had a pensive expression, but her large gray eyes were quick and alert, and moved with interest and curiosity from one member of our party to another. She did not speak during the selection and bargaining, but observed everything that was done and listened to everything that was said.

When we were leaving the poultry-yard she stepped up to Doris and said: "I am glad you wanted chickens. I have not seen a stranger since March."

Delighted to have this opportunity given her to ask questions, Doris asked questions without stint.

"Yes," answered the young woman, "my two sisters and I live here all alone by ourselves. This high fence and the iron bars to the lower windows are to keep out burglars. Alwilda — she is the one who came to the front door — and Lizeth — that one over there with the chickens — are very much afraid of burglars. There is no man in the house. Our hired man sleeps in the barn. Alwilda locks the two yard-gates herself every night, so he is shut out just the same as everybody else. My name is Dolor — Dolor Tripp. Tripp is our family name. Yes, it is dreadfully lonely. We don't do anything but just live here, except Alwilda; she paints."

"Paints!" exclaimed Doris in surprise, recalling the figure of the tall woman in the black-and-white sunbonnet.

"Yes," replied Dolor Tripp. "She paints pictures on the dining-room walls. She has gone only half round the room, and she has been years and years at it. Sometimes she paints things she sees, and sometimes things she remembers. The things she remembers are done better than the things she sees. She never goes outside this yard."

"And you?" asked Doris. "Have you nothing to occupy your time?"

"Not a thing," replied the young woman, "except housework, and that does n't count. I should like the chickens, but Lizeth attends to them. I hardly ever see neighbors or strangers. The minute I heard that there were people here to buy chickens I came straight out. I am glad to see anybody."

I had joined the group, and noticed that at these words a smile appeared on the hitherto somewhat pensive countenance of the speaker. She looked around and perceived that her sister and Lord Crabstairs had gone to a little distance to look at some ducks.

"Do you know," she said, "that over and over again I have felt glad that that pine tree is growing so close to the corner of the house. It never enters the minds of Alwilda and Lizeth that there is any danger in it, but you can see for yourselves that if a burglar once got into the yard he could go up that tree just the same as a ladder, and get into that second-story window. I have sat up half the night

wondering if a burglar ever would come up that tree."

"Do you mean to say," I asked, "that your feeling of loneliness is so great that you would even be glad to see a burglar?"

"I don't exactly say that I would be glad to see one," answered Dolor, "but it would be a change."

"You must indeed be lonely," said Doris, looking upon the girl with earnest sympathy, "if you consider a burglar better than nobody."

Doris looked at Dolor Tripp for a few moments, and then suddenly turned to me with a light upon her face. She drew me aside, and whispered: "A glittering idea has just struck me. Suppose we propose to her to go with us! A voyage to Boston would do her no end of good; and when we came back we could leave her here just as well as not. Shall I ask her?"

There was a deference in these concluding words which greatly pleased me. As a rule I did not desire any more women on the *Merry Chanter*, but this case was exceptional. The passage money of the young woman would be of service, it would be an excellent thing for Doris to have a suitable person of her own sex on board, and it would be true charity to give this poor girl a chance to see something of the world. As to her being a stranger to us, that did not matter. Most of us were comparative strangers to one another, and it is not customary to inquire into the character and family antecedents of passengers to Boston.

When Doris made her suggestion to Dolor Tripp the eyes of the latter opened wide and sparkled.

"Go to Boston?" she cried. "In a ship? With you? Go? Why, I would go if I had to sell my hair! But Alwilda will never agree. Lizeth may—I don't know; but you can't move Alwilda one inch. But don't suppose I am not going," she added quickly. "Nothing would ever happen if you waited for Alwilda to agree. When do you start?"

"We ought to set sail," said Doris, "very soon after we get to the ship. I suppose all the water must be on board by this time."

"Oh, dear!" said Dolor Tripp. "That would be dreadfully soon. I don't see how I could manage it."

During our conversation with the young woman the butcher had been standing by, silent but observant. He now stepped forward. "I don't believe, ma'am," he said, addressing Doris, "that we can sail as soon as we get back. The skipper wants to go out on the ebb, and it must have been high tide two hours ago, so that by the time we are aboard and everythin' is ready there won't be much ebb tide to go out on; and it won't be high water again until after dark to-night. So you see Cap'n Timon is more than likely to want to wait till to-morrow mornin' anyway."

"Well," said Doris, "there is n't really any reason why we should be in a hurry. Boston will keep, I 've no doubt. And if Captain Timon thinks it is better to wait until to-morrow morning, of course we can wait until then. Will that suit you?" she said to Dolor Tripp, whose countenance was now glowing with excitement.

"That will be time enough," was the answer. "I shall know all about it this afternoon."

"Can you send us word," asked Doris, "so we may know whether or not to expect you?"

Dolor Tripp looked a little embarrassed, but before she could speak the butcher said to her, "Have you a clock in your house?"

"Of course we have," she answered promptly.

"Well, then," said he, "if you will have a note ready at six o'clock precisely I 'll come here and get it."

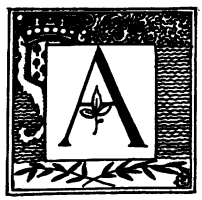
"Very well," said Dolor Tripp; "I 'll have it ready. It will be better for you to go to the lower end of the yard, and I 'll hand the note to you through the palings. The gate is directly in front of the dining-room windows."

Lord Crabstairs and Lizeth now returned to us, his lordship having given up the idea of buying ducks, because there would be no way of allowing them to swim except by lowering them from the ship by means of a long cord; and this would be feasible only when we were at anchor. The butcher and I now took up the coop containing the hen and chickens, our disengaged hands each bearing a pair of fowls, while his lordship carried the rest of the purchased poultry, gallantly declining to allow Doris to bear the weight of even the smallest pullet.

We left behind us two happy sisters, one placidly smiling over the results of an unusually profitable sale, and the other glowing with the anticipation of unknown joys.

IX

THE *MERRY CHANTER* AND THE TIDE



LITTLE before dark that afternoon the butcher appeared before Doris and me on the after portion of the deck and made his report.

"I got to that house," he said, "at a quarter before six; and as I was a little ahead of time I waited outside the pale fence, keeping some bushes between me and the house. Pretty soon that Dolor sister came out and began walking straight down to the corner of the fence; but before she got there the Lizeth sister she came out, and then the Dolor sister she turned straight towards the chicken-yard, and going inside the feed-house she came out with her apron full of corn and began feeding the chickens right and left like mad; and the Lizeth sister she called out to her to stop wasting corn that way, and she went and took the corn from her and began to attend to the chickens herself. Then the Dolor sister she went walking about picking the weed blossoms, throwing 'em down again and picking more, and all the time moving down towards the fence; and the minute the Lizeth sister locked the poultry-yard and went into the house the Dolor one came straight to the corner

where she said she 'd meet me, and there I was. She put this note between the palings, and says she, 'Is there any way of getting a trunk from this house to your ship to-night?' 'Unbeknown?' says I. 'Yes,' said she; 'at least nobody here must know it.' 'Then you are going with us to Boston?' says I. 'Yes, indeed, I am,' says she; 'but there will be no trouble about me. It 's only the trunk.' 'Then your sisters are not willing?' says I. 'They would n't be if I told 'em,' says she, 'and so I don't intend to tell 'em. They have n't the least right in the world over me, for I am of age; but they 'd make a lot of trouble if they knew I wanted to go to Boston, and I don't want to have any more trouble than I can help having.' 'When will your trunk be ready?' says I, 'and where will it be?' 'There 's an empty one in a lower room,' says she; 'and after it gets pitch-dark I can put it outside by the back door, and then I can bring my things down and put them in it, but I can't move it after that.' 'At what time will it be all packed and locked and at the back door?' says I. 'Certainly by twelve o'clock,' says she. 'Then at one o'clock,' says I, 'it will be on board the ship.' 'That is beautiful,' says she; 'and as soon as the lower gate is unlocked for the hired man in the morning, I 'll walk through the chicken-yard and around the sand hills till I am out of sight of the house and then go straight to the shore.' 'Where there 'll be a boat to meet you,' says I. Then she said she supposed I was the cap'n, and on being told not thanked me all the same and left sharp. And here 's the note."

With the exception of the statement that the writer would bring money to pay her passage, the note contained nothing that the butcher had not told us.

"I like her spirit," said Doris. "If she is of age there is no reason why she should n't go to Boston, or anywhere else she wants to. But how in the world is her trunk to be got here? The gates will be locked."

"The schoolmaster and me," said the butcher, "will attend to the trunk. He won't be afraid to go on shore when it is pitch-dark, and I 'll take a bull's-eye lantern to use when needed."

This being settled, Doris and I went below to arrange for the accommodation of the new-comer. There was a little cabin back of our own, which we appropriated to Dolor Tripp. Its space was extremely limited, but we could do no better for her.

Lord Crabstairs had been so exceedingly busy in arranging accommodations for the poultry on the deck, and in endeavoring to entice from the rigging the cock which had first arrived on board, that he did not know of the arrangements that had been made for the transfer of the baggage of Dolor Tripp. Otherwise, as he informed us next morning, he would have been on hand, for a lark like that was much to his liking.

The butcher and the schoolmaster must have had a hard time with the trunk, but they succeeded in getting it over the high fence, and by one o'clock, as had been promised, it was on board the *Merry Chanter.*

Doris and I arose very early the next morning, and it could not have been more than half-past six when we beheld Dolor Tripp coming down to the shore with a parasol in one hand and a little leather bag in the other. Lord Crabstairs was standing near us, and the moment his eyes fell upon her he gave a jump.

"I 'll take a boat and fetch her," said he. "I can do that much, anyway."

"Stop!" cried Doris. "I do not think that would be fair. After all the butcher's trouble about her he should have the pleasure of bringing her over in the boat."

"I don't quite see the point of that," said Lord Crabstairs. "'Turn about is fair play.'"

"That would be no turn about at all," said Doris; "but we have no time to argue this matter, for Dolor Tripp will get down to the water's edge and find nobody to bring her over. So, as I command the *Merry Chanter*, and everybody in it, I am obliged to say to you, Lord Crabstairs, that you cannot go after that young woman unless the butcher is willing."

It struck me that this was a moment when a word from me seemed to be called for, but I could not make up my mind what sort of word to speak.

Lord Crabstairs made a very low bow. "Madam," said he, "I submit; and I will go find the butcher and see if he will give me his chance."

In about a minute the butcher appeared from below, and made instant preparations to descend into the boat which was tied to the schooner's stern. "It will be much better," he said, "for some one who knows

her to go after her. She may not like to be brought over by a stranger."

"'Know her!' 'Stranger!' Bedad, I like that!" ejaculated Lord Crabstairs, as the butcher rowed away. "He rows very well for a butcher, now, does n't he? I don't believe a man who rows as well as that can be a very good butcher. Now, do you, Madam?"

"I do declare," exclaimed Doris, without paying any attention to this inquiry, "she really does seem delighted to see him! And I am so glad she has on that pretty straw hat. I was afraid she would come in her black-and-white sunbonnet."

The shore was but a short distance away, and very soon Dolor Tripp was on board the *Merry Chanter.* She was cordially received by the owners, the four captains, and the passengers, and shook hands all round.

"And now," cried Doris, "we must up anchor, hoist sail, and be away without loss of time. I long to be out on the rolling deep."

But Captain Timon shook his head. "The tide does n't serve this mornin', Madam," said he.

"Oh, bother the tide!" cried Doris. "I never saw anything like it. But I beg you will make a start the instant it does serve." And with this she took Dolor Tripp down below to show her the arrangements that had been made for her accommodation.

Lord Crabstairs, who was an active fellow, now mounted aloft to compel the truant cock to get down from its elevated position in the rigging, while the schoolmaster, carrying the sandpiper in its cage,

appeared on deck and proceeded to give the usual morning attentions to the wounded bird.

The butcher, his hands in his pockets and an expression of earnest thought on his face, came after me. Meeting me at the extreme stern of the vessel, he said in a low voice: "Do you know that I have got some ideas about this schooner? We have been lying here more than three days, and in all that time I don't believe she 's moved around with the tide any more than that stump there on shore has moved around with it. Tide in and tide out, twice a day each way, and she 's been lying here with her bowsprit pointing out to sea and her rudder pointing into shore with never a shift one way or the other. Now it stands to reason, I take it, that if a schooner like this could move with the tide she would move with it; and as she does n't move with it, it stands to reason she can't move with it."

"I never thought of that!" I exclaimed in surprise. "But, since you speak of it, I believe it is so. What do you suppose it means?"

"Means?" replied the butcher, looking around him and speaking in lower tones. "I 'll tell you what I believe it means. I think that we are stuck fast to the bottom of this bay. When they first came in they put out their anchor, and then the schooner, most likely, swung around on to a sand bar, and stuck tight and fast. If she has n't done that, what 's to hinder her moving with the tide?"

"But the captains?" I said. "If the ship were aground they would mention it. They would do something."

"They are not much on the mention," said the butcher; "and as to do, they 've been hoping every high tide would float her off. I would have been on deck this morning when the Dolor sister showed on shore if I had n't been listening to the cap'ns' talk about some particular high tide that comes with a particular quarter of the moon. I was called off and did n't make out what quarter it was, but I believe they 're waiting for it."

"If that is the case," said I, "I hope most earnestly that it is not far off."

"There 's no knowing," said the butcher, rather lugubriously. "I don't care to ask 'em about it, for it 's their business to sail the ship, not mine. But there 's one thing I do know, and that is when an old schooner like this, with some seventy cart-loads of paving stones inside of her, and barnacles outside that will weigh about as much, settles on a sand bank, she 'll want a special high tide to come along at its earliest convenience if she ever expects to float at all."

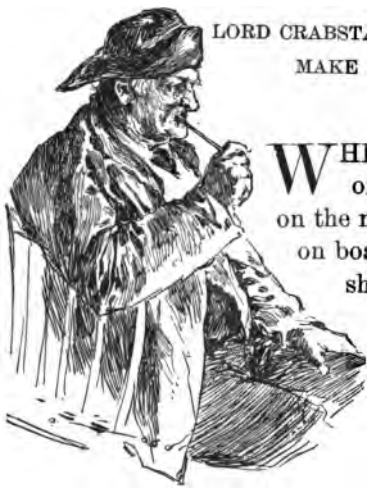
I gazed gloomily over the stern. The little boat was gently pulling at her painter as the tide impelled her seaward, but the *Merry Chanter* kept its position like a Horse Guard on sentry duty. "At any rate," I said, "it will be of no use to worry the ladies with our conjectures."

"I am with you there," said the butcher. "It would n't be my way to trouble them or anybody else. But it strikes me that we 'll find things pretty crooked when we eat up all our provisions before we 've sailed an inch to Boston, and the news gets

around that we 're aground in Shankashank Bay, and Mrs. Bodship comes after the schoolmaster, and either carries him off, and perhaps Cap'n Cyrus too, or else stays on board herself, which would be an everlasting sight worse, and the Alwilda sister and the Lizeth sister come after Dolor Tripp, and Lord Crabstairs gets kidnapped for the family debts while wandering on shore."

X

LORD CRABSTAIRS AND THE BUTCHER MAKE AN AGREEMENT



Captain Bodship.

WHEN Dolor Tripp came on deck after breakfast on the morning of her arrival on board the *Merry Chanter* she was in a state of intense delight with her surroundings. She was going to sea in a ship! She had been on the bay in a boat, but never on the sea in a ship! And what was this for — and that? And how different the air was, even such a little way from shore!

When Doris told her how we came to own the *Merry Chanter*, and had talked to her about the four captains, and about the butcher, and about Lord Crabstairs, and about the schoolmaster, Dolor Tripp declared that that ship was the most interesting place she had ever been in in her whole life.

She was in no hurry to start, and was perfectly willing to wait for the tide. Being on board the ship was joy enough for the present. She asked questions

about every part of the vessel; and although the four captains would have been the proper persons to answer these questions, these experienced mariners were not allowed the opportunity of so doing. Lord Crabstairs and the butcher always happened to be near at hand when Dolor Tripp wanted to know anything; and sometimes both answered her question in the same instant, while sometimes one got a little ahead of the other.

Towards noon, however, I noticed that Dolor Tripp was walking about the after portion of the ship accompanied only by Lord Crabstairs, and soon afterwards I found that he and the butcher had come to an agreement on the subject. A chalk line had been drawn across the deck midway between the bow and the stern, and it had been settled that Lord Crabstairs should explain to Dolor Tripp everything aft of that line, while the butcher should have the privilege of being her guide over that portion of the schooner which lay forward of the line. By this amicable arrangement annoying interferences would be avoided.

Lord Crabstairs, with his glowing, ruddy face, and his sparkling blue eyes, was in a very good humor as he told his companion everything he knew about the after portion of the ship, and a great deal, I am sure, that he did not know. But want of knowledge did not interfere in the least with the fluency of his merry talk, nor with her enjoyment.

For some time the butcher had been below, but now he came up and informed Doris and me that he had been consulting with Captain Cyrus, and

getting as much information as possible in regard to foremasts and bowsprits, with their attachments and surroundings, so that when his turn to guide the young woman should come he would be able to give her points that might be depended upon. When he and Lord Crabstairs had tossed up for the two portions into which the ship had been divided by the chalk line he had been very glad that the bow end had fallen to him.

"Passengers," said he, "are mostly at sterns, and bows are newer to them. And, besides, the *Merry Chanter* is on my end, and I intend to come out strong on that dilapidated old party. I think she 's the kind of young woman to take to things that are on the romantic."

But he did not intend to begin with her as soon as Lord Crabstairs had finished. No, indeed! He was too deep for that! He would take her when she was fresh, and not so bored with ropes and spars that she did not wish to hear such things even so much as mentioned.

It was yet early in the afternoon, and we were enjoying ourselves idly on deck, some reading, some smoking and talking, and nearly all of us in the shade of the mainsail, which had been partly hoisted to serve the purpose of an awning. Even the butcher was content to gaze quietly out at sea, for, in his opinion, Dolor Tripp had not yet sufficiently recovered from her ordeal of the morning properly to enjoy his interesting accounts of the nautical objects forward of the chalk line. Suddenly there came from landward a shrill voice; and the voice cried, "Do — lo ——— r!"

Instantly we all sprang to our feet, bobbed under the boom, and ran for the stern of the schooner. On shore, close to the water's edge, stood a woman in a black-and-white sunbonnet, who was easily recognized by those who had seen her before as Lizeth of the poultry-yard.

Again came the voice across the water: "Dol—or! Are you on that ship?"

Dolor Tripp stood on tiptoe and showed herself well above the bulwarks. "Don't you see me, Lizeth?" she cried.

The distance between the ship and the shore was not great; and as there was but little wind the clear, high voices of the sisters were distinctly heard across the intervening space.

"Where-are-you-going?" cried Lizeth.

"I-am-going-to-Boston," replied her sister.

"How-long-do-you-expect-to-stay?" cried Lizeth.

Dolor Tripp turned to Doris. "How long do you think," she said, "that the ship will stay in Boston? You know I want to come back in it."

"I really do not know," was the answer; "but we shall certainly stay long enough to take on board some barrels of flour."

Then Dolor Tripp turned her face shoreward, and hailed her sister. "I-do-not-know," she cried. "It-depends-on-flour."

"What-flour?" screamed Lizeth.

Dolor Tripp turned inquiringly. "Minnesota Family Joy," said I, for want of better information to give.

"Min-ne-so-ta-Fam-i-ly-Joy," screamed Dolor Tripp.

Lizeth did not immediately resume her questions, but after a few moments' thought she cried, "Why-don't-you-start?"

"There-is-some-thing-the-matter-with-the-tide," replied Dolor Tripp.

Here there was another pause in this high-strung conversation, and several persons on board the *Merry Chanter* looked at one another and smiled.

Lizeth now called out again, "Will-you-get-me-in-Boston-four-yards-of-the-inch-wide-black-and-white-ribbon?"

"I-will!" cried Dolor Tripp. "Does-Alwilda-know-I-'ve-gone?"

"Yes," called back Lizeth. "She-'s-begun-painting-you-on-the-dining-room-wall. You-are-stretched-out-drowned-on-the-sea-shore. Your-face-is-all-soaked-and-there-'s-little-slimy-green-weeds-flappin'-against-it. She-was-just-beginnin'-to-paint-a-puddle-under-you-when-I-came-away. Good-bye!"

"Now, is n't that mean?" said Dolor Tripp, turning a troubled countenance towards us, and then, suddenly recollecting herself, she called after her departing sister a shrill, "Good-bye!"

"I notice," remarked the butcher, as he cast a severe look shoreward, "that she did n't say anything about the weeds and the puddle till she 'd got in her black-and-white ribbon."

In order to dissipate from her mind all thoughts of the dismal picture of herself which was in course of creation upon the dining-room wall of her home, the butcher now invited Dolor Tripp to allow him to show her that portion of the *Merry Chanter* which

lay forward of the chalk line. The invitation was accepted, and from the general appearance of things forward I think that Dolor Tripp's enjoyment was troubled by no visions of soaked countenances.

The captains were on the forecastle, and as they all knew something about Dolor Tripp or her family, they had frequent snatches of talk about her. Lord Crabstairs and the schoolmaster took to wandering about the bow, but the former never uttered a word. He had agreed that the butcher should take charge of the lady on this part of the ship, and he religiously forbore to speak.

When the butcher and his fair companion leaned over the extreme bow, and he began to describe and descant upon the wooden figure of the Merry Chanter, Doris, who had gone forward, requested permission to listen, which, being cheerfully granted, we all gathered about the speaker.

It is astonishing how well that butcher talked about our old figure-head. He let himself out splendidly about roaring winds and mountain waves, and driving rain and freezing sleet, and banks of blinding fog, and yet ever that right arm, or what there was left of it, was stuck straight out, and that head was thrown back boldly, and that mouth was open ready for song, or shout, or to take in sea-water, as the case might be.

"He has been through it all, time and again," said the butcher, in conclusion, "and he is ready for it all over again, fair weather or foul, as long as those iron bolts through his body hold him fast to the ship."

"I love him already," cried Dolor Tripp; "and

as soon as we begin to plow the waves I am going to stand in front here and see him do those things."

"Of course," remarked Captain Timon, "that will depend on the principal owner"—waving his hand towards Doris. "I have heard her say that she wanted to stand abaft the figure-head when there happened to be a good sea on."

"Oh, there will be room for us both," said Doris, who had already begun to take very kindly to Dolor Tripp.

XI

THE PROMENADE BATH

HE next morning after breakfast Captain Timon made a little speech to the assembled ship's company. "I feel bound," he said, "to tell you all that I 've been disapp'inted in the wind an' the tide. They are two things which won't wait fur no man, but they 're willin' enough to make any man wait fur them, an' that 's not what I call the square thing."

"You are right there, Captain," said Lord Crabstairs; "but the rascals have been at it all their lives, and it is too late to try to reform them."

"This schooner," continued the captain, "draws a leetle more water than we thought she did. You see none of us ever sailed in her before, an' she draws a leetle more water than we thought she did. An' then ag'in there 's a leetle less water in this bay than there generally is at this season. You see when we anchored here to get water out of that spring we did n't know that the ship drawed so much, an' the bay was so low."

"Then," interrupted Lord Crabstairs, "you should get more water out of your spring and pour it into your bay."

Captain Timon joined in the laugh that followed this remark, and then went on:

"What we want is a high wind, pretty nigh to a gale, comin' in from sea along with the flood tide. That will give us enough water to get out of this bay, an' then we 're all right. That half-gale from the sou'east is what we 're a-waitin' fur."

"That sort of gale," said the butcher, "most generally comes in the fall of the year."

"That is autumn, is n't it?" cried Lord Crabstairs. "Now, really, that is three months off!"

"If you 'd sailed the sea as much as we have," said Captain Timon, addressing the butcher, "you 'd have know'd that them gales blows whenever they 've a mind to. That 's their rule; whenever they 've a mind to. Now there 's just two things we can do; an' one of them is to get a vessel that don't draw so much water; Cap'n Teel has got one to hire. She 's a sloop, and a good one. He can bring her round here, an' we can put our stores into her an' sail to Boston without no trouble at all."

At this point there was a general outcry. "Sail in another ship!" cried Doris. "Never! It is not the voyage to Boston I care about; it is the voyage there in our *Merry Chanter*."

I joined in the remonstrance. Lord Crabstairs vowed that he was in no hurry, and could wait for a wind as long as anybody else. And Dolor Tripp asserted with considerable warmth that if she could not sail behind that bold, wooden singer of the sea she did not wish to sail at all.

The butcher had been gazing intently upon first

one and then another of us; and when Dolor Tripp had said her say he spoke out fully and definitely. "I stick to the ship," said he.

The schoolmaster made no remark. He was not now so uneasy as he had been at first, but it was plain enough that he wished to sail away, no matter in what vessel.

"Well, then," now continued Captain Timon, "as none of you seems to want to leave the schooner, there 's another thing you can do. You can just make yourselves comfortable an' wait fur the gale with a flood tide. Some of you can take the boat an' go fishin'; some of you can walk about on shore; an' if any of you wants to hire a horse you can do it over there in the village. If there 's a special high tide when you are not aboard I 'll just run the schooner out into deeper water an' fire a gun and wait fur you."

This plan was instantaneously agreed upon, and to prove that we were perfectly contented with the *Merry Chanter*, we all set about to amuse ourselves.

Lord Crabstairs went to look after his poultry. These were mostly scattered about the deck, none of them having courage to fly overboard; but some had gone out on the bowsprit, and the truant cock was still in the rigging. His master had vainly endeavored to coax him down, and was obliged to put his corn on the cross-trees, where it was contentedly pecked up. Doris applied herself to the care of her little chicks and their mother; three of the captains went ashore in the boat; the butcher was making some remarks to me in regard to the improbability

of the schooner's moving from her present position without leaving behind her her hold, her paving-stones, and her barnacles; and what Dolor Tripp was looking at in the water I do not know, but suddenly her little boots, in which she was standing tiptoe, slipped backward, and in an instant she disappeared over the side of the vessel.

I gave a shout and rushed for the spot where she had been leaning over the bulwark. Doris, startled by the great splash, was by my side in a moment. Looking down with pallid faces we saw below us what appeared like the surface of a boiling pot some five feet wide. Out of the tossing turmoil of the water now arose the dripping head, shoulders, and arms of Dolor Tripp, who had succeeded in struggling to her feet and who stood upright, puffing and blowing the water from her mouth, wildly waving her hands, and endeavoring to scream.

In the next instant there were two great splashes, and the butcher and Lord Crabstairs went overboard. Each of them was under water for an instant, and then emerging upright they swashed towards the dripping maiden and each took her by an arm.

"You are as safe now," exclaimed Lord Crabstairs, sputtering as he spoke, "as if you were high and dry on shore."

"Unless we sink in the sand," said the butcher.

But Dolor Tripp paid no attention to similes and suppositions. "Oh, get me out!" she cried. "Get me out!"

Those of us who were on deck soon discovered that it would not be easy to get her out. There was one

broad ladder with hand-rails by which we descended into or ascended from the one boat which belonged to the *Merry Chanter*, and this ladder had been taken ashore in the boat by the three captains who had

The Promenade Bath.

gone for fuel, and who proposed to use it when sawing off such lower branches of trees as might be small enough to suit their purpose. The idea that anybody might want the ladder while they were

gone never entered the minds of these wood-cutting mariners.

Captain Teel, who was left on board, was not very fertile in expedients. He proposed hauling up the young woman by means of a rope; and when the butcher declared that if this were done she would be cut to pieces by the barnacles, the captain suggested that if a spar were put out at an angle, with one end held down to the bottom and the other resting on the side of the vessel, she might climb on board without touching the barnacles.

This proposition meeting with no approval, the captain stated that the proper thing to do was to put a block-and-tackle out at the end of a boom and haul her up that way, but that as he was the only seaman on board he did not like to undertake this job by himself. He might put a barrel of fish on board that way, but it would take a good deal of careful hauling and steering to prevent a dangling young woman from getting bumped. He rather guessed that the boat would be back pretty soon, and that the best thing to do would be to wait for it.

This seemed like hard lines for Dolor Tripp, and I suggested that the three should wade to shore.

"They can't do that," said Captain Teel. "The water is deeper nearer shore than it is just here. If they go a dozen yards from the schooner it will be over their heads. We 've made soundin's."

"I suppose," said Doris to the group in the water, "that you will have to wait till the boat comes; but you ought to walk about to keep from taking cold."

"Very good," said Lord Crabstairs; and releasing his hold upon Dolor Tripp, he offered his arm in the usual fashion. The butcher, on her other side, did the same, and the three began their walk through the water.

"You can go all around the ship," said Captain Teel, "if you don't get too far away from her, and I guess you 'll find the bottom pretty hard and smooth."

The tide was very low, the water being not more than waist-deep for the men and below the shoulders of Dolor Tripp; but it was quite deep enough to make walking a very slow performance. But as the young woman put perfect faith in the ability of her protectors, and as the two men were greatly pleased to have this opportunity of aiding and protecting her, the spirits of the little party recovered their usual level as they pushed their way through the water. On deck, Doris and I, with Captain Teel and the schoolmaster, kept pacè with them, the latter carrying a plank which he intended to hurl to or upon Dolor Tripp in case of danger, such as a tidal wave or an attack by sharks.

"I like it ever so much!" cried Dolor Tripp to Doris. "It is a promenade bath. The water is warm and lovely."

Reaching the bow of the ship, Dolor Tripp looked up at the Merry Chanter.

"I never expected," she said, "to be under him and look at him from the sea. I wonder if I could climb up to him by this anchor-chain?"

"Don't try it, Miss," said Lord Crabstairs. "If you

ever climb up to anybody, don't let it be to a wooden-headed old party like that."

"When it comes to that sort of thing," said the butcher, "the climbing will be the other way."

Perhaps Dolor Tripp did not understand this remark, for she made no answer to it. As they moved on she said:

"How gently these little waves lap up against us! Do you gentlemen believe in mind waves?"

"I don't know what they are," said the butcher.

"If you mean a wavering of the mind," answered Lord Crabstairs, "I have had it often; particularly when I bought my last cow. I wavered between Alderney and Ayrshire for nearly a month, and, after all, I bought a Devon."

"Oh, it is n't anything like that," said the young woman. "It is a sort of understanding between minds that are far away from each other. It comes along in a sort of airy waves, something like these ripples, I suppose, and the thoughts and feelings of one friend go to another ever so far off."

"Oh, I know what it is!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "You can do it with snails. You go to China and take a she-snail with you, and I stay here with a he-snail, or vice versa. I can go to China with either and you can keep the other—"

"Do they have to be a married couple, to begin with?" interrupted the butcher.

"What! The people?" cried Lord Crabstairs.

"No, the snails," said the butcher.

"Yes," replied the other. "I forgot to say they must be a pair, so that there shall be a sympathy

between them." Then, again addressing the lady, "You have one snail and I the other one, and we 've got the whole world between us. Whichever of us wishes to communicate with the other takes a pin and jabs his or her snail, as the case may be, and in that very same instant the other snail wiggles."

"Horrible!" cried Dolor Tripp. "If I had to do that I would never communicate."

"I don't believe it hurts them," said Lord Crabstairs. "The least little bit of a prick will do. And we could get up a jab alphabet: one short jab, a long jab, two short jabs, with a rest between them—three long jabs, a rest and a short jab, and so on."

"I never would do it," said Dolor Tripp, firmly. "I would n't even watch wiggles that were made by pins in China."

The butcher did not wish to be left out of this conversation. "That must be pretty much the same thing," he said, "as is the case with the legs of frogs. You catch a dozen frogs and put their hind legs on a plate, all skinned and ready to be cooked, arranged in a circle with their toes pointing out like the spokes in a wheel, and then you sprinkle some salt on them and every one of those legs begins to kick. If you never saw it before you 'll drop the plate."

"That is not like my snails at all!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "A person in China could n't sprinkle salt on frog-legs here. If he were near enough to do that he might as well talk. I don't see any sense in that sort of thing, even allowing that your frog-legs do kick."

"I don't see any sense in the other sort of thing,"

said the butcher, "even if your snails do wiggle."

At this Dolor Tripp declared that her correspondence should always be either by letter or by telegraph; and she began to wonder when the boat would return. We all strained our eyes shoreward, but nothing could be seen of the nautical woodcutters, and the three in the water were obliged to continue their stroll around the vessel.

Captain Teel now made a joke which for some time had been resolving itself into form in his mind. "She calls it a promenade bath," he said, with a subdued giggle, "but to me it looks a good deal more like a promenade baptize. That butcher in his shirt looks just like a minister with a pair of uncommon sinners."

I had noticed that every time the party passed under the bow the butcher looked very attentively at his disengaged arm, which hung down by his side. Having caught my eye, he now turned back a little and held up his hand with his forefinger and thumb separated about two inches. He then pointed towards the surface of the water, and after that let his arm drop again.

The meaning of this pantomime was very plain to me. He had been measuring the depth of the water by some mark on his sleeve, and the tide had risen two inches. He wanted me to know that he was getting uneasy. I began to grow uneasy also. I would have been better pleased had not the butcher always chosen me as the recipient of his forebodings.

But there was no reason for anxiety, for, as the

hour for dinner drew nigh, the three captains emerged from the woods, two of them carrying the ladder and the other a bundle of sticks. Dolor Tripp and her companions were then near the bow of the vessel, and concealed from view of persons on shore. By the time the boat had nearly reached the schooner the three water-walkers came around the bow, and there never were more astonished mariners than our captains when they beheld the three heads and shoulders which apparently floated towards them. Captain Cyrus, who held the tiller, was so startled that he nearly fell overboard, and in their sudden consternation the two others allowed a few words of the swearing variety to escape from their lips — the first we had heard from them since they had entered our service.

"Now you see," said Lord Crabstairs to Dolor Tripp, "if those sailors had taken a snail with them and we had had a snail, we could have let them know what was the matter, and they would have turned back immediately and taken us out of the water. Every ship should carry a lot of snails in case the people on board get separated."

The butcher shrugged his shoulders, but evidently saw no way of bringing his frogs' legs to the fore.

Our friends were soon on board and in dry clothes; and when the butcher appeared on deck he took me to one side and remarked: "As I was walking round this ship I made up my mind it would n't be long before her barnacles grew down into the sand bank — that is, if they grow that way; and when that happens, and taking into consideration the

seventy cart-loads of paving stones in her hold, she 'll have a pretty strong foundation. But, of course, there 's no use saying anything of that kind to the ladies, especially if they 're beginning to feel as if they 'd like to be getting on to Boston."

XII

DOLOR TRIPP TAKES US UNDER HER WING

HE gloomy remarks of the butcher in regard to the permanency of the *Merry Chanter's* position had a certain effect upon me. I did not agree with him, for I had full faith in the knowledge and experience of our skipper, and believed that when the exceptional gale and the exceptional tide came along together our ship would float off the sand bank and sail out of Shankashank Bay. But the continual allusions of the butcher to our barnacles and our seventy cartloads of paving stones could but depress me. It would require such a very high tide and such a very strong gale to move us. As we had started for Boston, I wanted to go there.

Doris, to my surprise, appeared to have become reconciled to the delay. Of course, as she had started for Boston, she wanted to go there; but, as she several times remarked, she did not wish to be unreasonable. She knew there were many delays connected with voyages on sailing vessels, such as calms, head winds, and the like, and she supposed the cause of our present detention was equivalent to a calm. With this view Captain Timon coincided.

She had begun to feel at home in Shankashank Bay, and so long as she had to stay she determined to make the best of it. And in this resolve she was joined by the rest of the ship's company.

Lord Crabstairs could sing a good song, and he sang a great many. The butcher had a deep and earnest voice, and with this he joined in choruses. The rest of us also did our duty in this line according to our abilities. The schoolmaster conducted spelling-bees; Doris told stories, which she did excellently well; and I delivered one lecture on "The Analysis of Lava." The only person, however, who appeared to be much interested in the subject was Lord Crabstairs, who inquired if there were any volcanoes near Boston. I think this question was inspired by a glimmer of hope in regard to the lifting of the hereditary debts of his family; for when I told him that there were no volcanoes near the port to which we were bound, he fixed his eyes upon the back of Dolor Tripp, and I am sure gave no further thought to lava.

On the second day after the water promenade a picnic on shore was proposed; and immediately after dinner the two ladies, with myself, the butcher, Lord Crabstairs, and the schoolmaster, went on shore. The latter declined at first to be of our party, for fear that Mrs. Bodship might catch sight of him; but as the butcher lent him a gown and a high silk hat, he was convinced that he might go with us without danger of being recognized — at least at a distance. He took with him the sandpiper in its cage; for, although the bird was well on its way to

recovery, he considered it not yet able to take care of itself.

Our plan was to go some distance inland, eat our supper at an appropriate rural spot, and, returning to the shore at the close of the day, take a moonlight row on Shankashank Bay. This was to be long or short according to our pleasure, and when it was over we would return to the *Merry Chanter*. We invited any of the captains who chose to accompany us, but they all declined. The exceptional gale might come in with the tide, and in that case they should all be on board to take the schooner out into deeper water.

We rambled about two miles inland, and our little excursion was enjoyed by all of us until we were preparing to return to the shore after having eaten our supper. Then a sudden rain-storm burst upon us, and we ceased to enjoy the excursion. Hastily gathering up our baskets and wraps, we ran for the nearest house; but as this was about a quarter of a mile away, we were well wet before we got there.

Even when we reached it we found it a poor place of refuge. It was a very small house, and there was nobody at home but a boy and girl, who, I am sure, would not have admitted us if we had knocked at the main door. But as we rushed pell-mell into the kitchen from the back of the house, they had no option in regard to our entrance. The girl, however, locked the door of the front or best room, so that we should not go in there with our wet feet and clothes, and we were obliged to bestow ourselves as

well as we could in the little kitchen, in which there was one chair. There was no fire, and the girl declared there was no need of making one until her mother came with the supper, and that she would not come until the rain was over. Had we been able to discover any fuel we would have made the fire ourselves; but as we saw none, we merely stood about and grumbled.

The heavy clouds, which had come up so fast from behind the woods in which we had supped, brought darkness upon us at least an hour before we expected it, and the rain continued to fall steadily. When we had spent half an hour or more in the dismal little kitchen Dolor Tripp spoke up.

"It will never do to stay here," she said. "We shall take our deaths of cold. Our house is not a mile away, and the best thing we can do is to go there. We are so wet now that we might as well be wetter, and when we get to the house we can warm and dry ourselves and stay until the rain is over."

The suggestion was accepted instantly, and heaping coals of fire upon the heads of the youngsters by giving them some small change, we tramped out into the storm. Dolor Tripp declared that dark as it was she knew she could find the way, for the road to her home was a moderately direct one, having but few turns; and, supported by Lord Crabstairs and the butcher, she led the way.

The road might have been direct enough and smooth enough if we could have kept in the middle of it; but the sides on which, without intending it, we did most of our walking were very rough, and as

we frequently ran against the fences on either side, Dolor Tripp declared that she believed that the roads were a good deal narrower by night than by day. But during our slow and stumbling progress we cheered ourselves with two reflections — we were getting nearer and nearer to a sheltering roof, and the exercise was keeping us from taking cold.

After walking for what seemed to me a very long time, Dolor Tripp remarked that she believed that she had passed a fork in the road where we should have turned to the right, and that we must go back a little. We went back; but after stumbling and splashing and peering about for nearly a quarter of an hour, our guide said that she now believed we had not passed the fork, and we might as well keep on.

We kept on and on and on, and at last we came to a fork,— which the butcher discovered,— and then we turned to the right. The rain now began to slacken, the clouds grew a little thinner, and a diluted and shadowed moonlight enabled us better to find our way. I asserted that I believed it would be well to change our course, and, instead of going to the Tripp house, turn shoreward and get back to the schooner as soon as possible.

This proposition, however, met with no favor. The others declared that as the road to the shore would from this point lead us over fields and sand hills we should be lost, and should miserably perish; whereas, from the Tripp house to the boat-landing we all knew the way, which, moreover, we need not take until we had dried ourselves and rested.

We therefore pressed on; and as we could now see the roadway, which, although sloppy, was comparatively smooth, we made fair progress, and after a time the house of our destination loomed up dark before us. As we made our way to the front gate Dolor Tripp remarked: "Of course they are abed and asleep, for they always go to bed early, and the gate must be locked."

"But I hope they will get up and open it," said I.

"Not Alwilda and Lizeth," she said. "You would n't think that if you knew them. They would n't unlock the gate after dark, even if they were up; and as to getting out of bed to do it, they 'd let Queen Victoria stand here and wait till morning."

For some time I had been in a bad humor, and I now felt very much provoked. "It might have been well," I said, "if you had thought of all this before you brought us here."

"I did, partly," said Dolor Tripp. "That is, I thought it would be just as well that they should be in bed and asleep when we got here, for I know Alwilda will talk dreadfully to me about going to Boston, and perhaps talk me out of it; but I did n't happen to think that if they were not up we might not get in."

"There is no need bothering about the gate," quickly spoke up the butcher. "I can make an opening in this fence and not hurt it, either. And when we get inside the yard I expect we can find some window or door unfastened. There always is in country houses."

Dolor Tripp replied that if he did not hurt the fence she thought that would be a good plan, and in a few minutes the butcher had felt along the fence and

found a place where the pales were somewhat loose, by reason of age. He and Lord Crabstairs then pulled five or six of them from their bottom fastenings and pushed them to one side, so that the party easily entered.

The butcher enjoined us to make as little noise as possible. It was natural that he should not wish to wake up a woman who might talk Dolor Tripp into not going to Boston. Then he said he would go by himself round the house and try the shutters and doors.

"You need n't do that," said Dolor Tripp. "There is n't a door or a window on the lower floor that is n't bolted, or locked, or barred, or screwed up."

There was a little murmur among us. The rain had almost ceased, but we were tired, wet, and miserable, and what we wanted above all things was to rest ourselves before a fire. The situation was disheartening, and as for Doris and me, we did not care whether the sisters were wakened or not so that we got in and were warmed.

"I 'll knock at the door," said I, "and make some one come down and open it."

Dolor Tripp held up a warning hand. "Don't do that," she said. "Alwilda has a gun. I've thought of a way to get in. Do you see that pine tree at the corner of the house? That is the tree that I expected the burglars to climb up when I used to sit and watch for them. And if a burglar could do it, I should think some one else could; and then he could easily push up the sash of that window and get in, and go through the room into the hall and down the stairs,

and take down the bar from this door and unlock it, and let us in."

"I'll do it!" said the butcher the moment she had finished speaking; and without delay, he advanced towards the tree.

"I would climb up and go in myself," said Lord Crabstairs, "but I am not sure that I understand these American houses."

The butcher took off his gown, which clung to him like a wet shroud, and casting it upon the grass he began to ascend the tree. This he did easily and rapidly, the horizontal branches affording him convenient hold for foot and hand. Very soon he was inside the house, and we listened anxiously, fearing that we might hear a noisy stumbling and the report of Alwilda's gun. But we heard no noise at all; and after what seemed an unnecessarily protracted period of waiting, the front door quietly opened.

"I did n't strike the stairs at first," whispered the butcher, "and I went too far along that upper hall; but when I came against a door that was partly open I knew I was wrong, and turned back."

"Mercy!" gasped Dolor Tripp. "That was their room!"

We all now entered, and the butcher gently closed the door behind us. There was an unshuttered window at the other end of the hall through which came enough dim light to enable us faintly to discern one another and surrounding objects.

"I'll go first," whispered Dolor Tripp, "and take you to the old part of the house."

So saying she led us, all stepping as softly as we

could, to a transverse hall, and along this to a large open door, through which we passed and went down three steps into another hall. This was very short; and opening a door at the end of it Dolor Tripp ushered us into a large room, into which the moonbeams, now grown brighter, came through a small unshuttered window high up in the wall.

Dolor Tripp, who seemed to be used to doing things in semi-darkness, took down an iron candlestick from the mantelpiece, and asked if anybody had a match. One was immediately produced by Lord Crabstairs and the candle was lighted.

"Now," said she, holding the light above her head, "this is the kitchen of the old house. Part of the old house was torn down to make room for the new one, which is pretty old itself, but this kitchen was left. If some one will close that door we shall be entirely shut off from the rest of the house, and then we need not be so particular about keeping quiet."

I did not care a snap whether this part of the house was old or new, but I saw before me a great old-fashioned fireplace with some charred logs lying upon the iron andirons, and at one end of the hearth a pile of firewood. This was what we had come for. We fell to work, and in ten minutes a great fire was blazing and crackling, the wet wraps of the ladies were removed, and we all gathered around the hearth, which fortunately was large enough to accommodate the six of us. It is astonishing how the genial heat dried our shoes and clothes and raised our spirits.

The schoolmaster and the butcher sat at the corners of the fireplace, and they were very well placed

indeed. The former took off his gown and hung it on a crane that extended from one side of the great fireplace. He wished to have it dry enough to put on when he went out. It was not probable that Mrs. Bodship would be rambling about the country at night, but he wanted to feel quite safe.

"Now, then," said Doris, "if we only had some good hot tea we ought to be perfectly happy."

"And something to eat," added Lord Crabstairs. "I, for one, am half famished."

"You can have both tea and something to eat," said Dolor Tripp. "We have used this kitchen as a storeroom for the things we buy in quantities. In that cupboard is a box of tea, and there is sugar and salt and spices, and a barrel of flour."

"We can't do anything with flour and salt without waiting ever so long," said Doris.

"I feel as if I could eat them without baking," said Lord Crabstairs.

"You need n't do that," said Dolor Tripp. "I can go quietly to the other end of the house, where the pantry is. There is always something to eat there. But first let us boil the kettle. If you, sir, will move your gown a little farther to the back of the crane there is a kettle here which we can hang over the fire."

Under her direction the butcher, with as little noise as possible, pumped some water from a cistern under the kitchen, and when the kettle was filled and over the fire the two ladies got down some cups, saucers, and a tea-pot from the shelves of a dresser which seemed to be filled with old-time pottery.

Then Dolor Tripp started to go to the pantry. "I will blow out the candle," she said, "and take it with me. Then I will light it when I get there. They are very hard to wake, but a light passing through the house might do it. You folks won't mind sitting here in the firelight?"

Of course we did not mind, and Doris offered to go with her. The two opened the kitchen door and went out into the little hall. In a moment they returned.

"What do you think," said Doris, in an excited undertone; "the door at the top of the steps that leads into the main building is fastened, and we cannot open it!"

In great surprise we all rose to our feet and looked towards Dolor Tripp that she might tell us what to think. "Is there a spring-lock on the door?" I asked.

"No," said she, "there is no spring-lock, and we did not close the door after us. We shut only this kitchen door. But I know who did it," she added, quietly. "It was the ghost. It is one of its ways to lock and bolt doors."

XIII

THE PIE GHOST

" HE ghost!" exclaimed Doris, with a quick grasp upon the arm of Dolor Tripp.

"I was sure of it!" said the butcher, looking straight in front of him and speaking very decidedly. "I saw something white moving in the front hall as I came down the stairs. I knew it for a ghost, but I did n't say anything, for I did n't suppose it would meddle with six people."

"Fiddle-faddle!" said Lord Crabstairs. "There are no such things as ghosts." And with this opinion I coincided. The schoolmaster said nothing. He resumed his seat at the side of the fireplace and rearranged his gown upon the crane, so as to expose all parts of it to the heat. It might be necessary to put it on suddenly.

"There is no mistake about this ghost," said Dolor Tripp. "If you will all sit down till the kettle boils I will tell you about it."

We resumed our seats in front of the fire, and the butcher put on some fresh sticks.

"It has been in this house," said Dolor, still hold-

ing the unlighted candle, "ever since I first came here, a little girl only ten years old. I soon began to see it, though I don't believe it often saw me."

"Did n't it frighten you nearly to death?" asked Doris.

"No," replied the other. "At first I thought it belonged to the house just as much as any of the other queer things which I found here, and there seemed to be no reason why I should be frightened at one thing more than at another."

"What did your sisters say about it?" asked Doris.

"They did n't say anything," replied the other. "I soon began to believe that they did n't know anything about it, and I was afraid that if I told them they would have something done to drive it out of the house."

We all looked at her in amazement. "And you did not want that?" asked Lord Crabstairs.

"No, indeed," replied Dolor Tripp. "I used to try to watch for it. I would go into different parts of the house at night and watch for it, hoping it would come by. Sometimes weeks and weeks would pass without my seeing it, and then I would get a glimpse of it on two or three nights in succession."

"What did it look like?" asked Doris.

"Its head was light or whitish, and below it gradually melted down into darkness."

"That was it," said the butcher. "That is exactly like the thing I saw."

"And you never, never told your sisters," said Doris, "that they were living in the house with a ghost?"

"No, indeed!" replied Dolor Tripp. "You see, before we came here we lived in a horrid little house in the town, and when it was decided by the court that this place belonged to us nobody was so glad as I was. So, as I told you, I did not want Alwilda and Lizeth to do anything to drive the ghost away; but what I was most afraid of was that they might find that they could n't get rid of it, and would go away themselves. I would n't have had that happen for anything in the world."

"And so," said Doris, "as the burglars would not come you did n't want to lose the visits of a ghost."

"Perhaps so," replied Dolor Tripp. "And now the kettle is boiling, and we can have some tea, if we can't get anything else."

"As for ghosts," interjected Lord Crabstairs, "I never have believed in them, and never shall. But I do know that I am as hungry as a wolf; and if you'll allow me, Miss, I 'll push open that door, no matter who fastened it on the other side, and I 'll go with you to the pantry, or anywhere else where there 's bread and meat, and defend you against all comers, ghosts or otherwise."

"Oh, you must not do that!" exclaimed Dolor Tripp. "The door would be broken, and Alwilda and Lizeth would surely wake up."

"As for believing in ghosts," said the butcher, "a good deal depends upon who does the believing. If you 've never had a chance of seeing ghosts, sir, you are out of the race."

The candle was now lighted, and cups of hot tea were served by the ladies. I hurriedly drank a cup and

then began to consider the situation. I went to the door at the top of the steps and tried it, thinking perhaps there might be a mistake in regard to its being fastened. But there had been no mistake. It was locked, and the key was on the other side. I did not like to be fastened up against my will in any place or by any agency.

I now insisted that we should leave this place without delay, by a window if there was no other outlet, and make our way to our boat.

"Oh, you can't get out," said Dolor Tripp, "until he unfastens the door. The window sashes are all nailed and screwed fast, and the outside shutters and that back door are padlocked. Alwilda and Lizeth are very particular about having this kitchen secure from burglars. But you need n't worry. That door will be opened before long. The ghost always does that after making you wait a little while."

"I think it is rather jolly," said Doris, "to have a ghost for a jailer, though I can't really say I should like to have him come in and bring us a jug of water and a loaf of bread."

"If he will do that," said Lord Crabstairs, "I 'll believe in him; although I don't care for the water, and should like him to fetch some meat or cheese with the bread."

Doris suddenly turned towards the schoolmaster. "What have you done with the sandpiper?" she said.

The butcher started. "You are not thinking of eating him?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said Doris, with a laugh. "We have not

got so low as that yet, although I must admit that I also am awfully hungry. But talking of things to eat made me think of the bird, and I wondered what had become of it."

"I left the cage," said the schoolmaster, "just outside by the front door. I put my hat over it to keep the rain off the sandpiper."

Lord Crabstairs smote his knees with his hands and laughed. "Why, man," he cried, "that tall silk hat has blown forty miles across country by this time!"

The butcher looked at him severely. "That's all right!" he said. "I should like to know how it could get out of this yard with such a high fence and no gate open. I don't believe it 's raining, anyway; so you may feel sure, ma'am, that the sandpiper is comfortable."

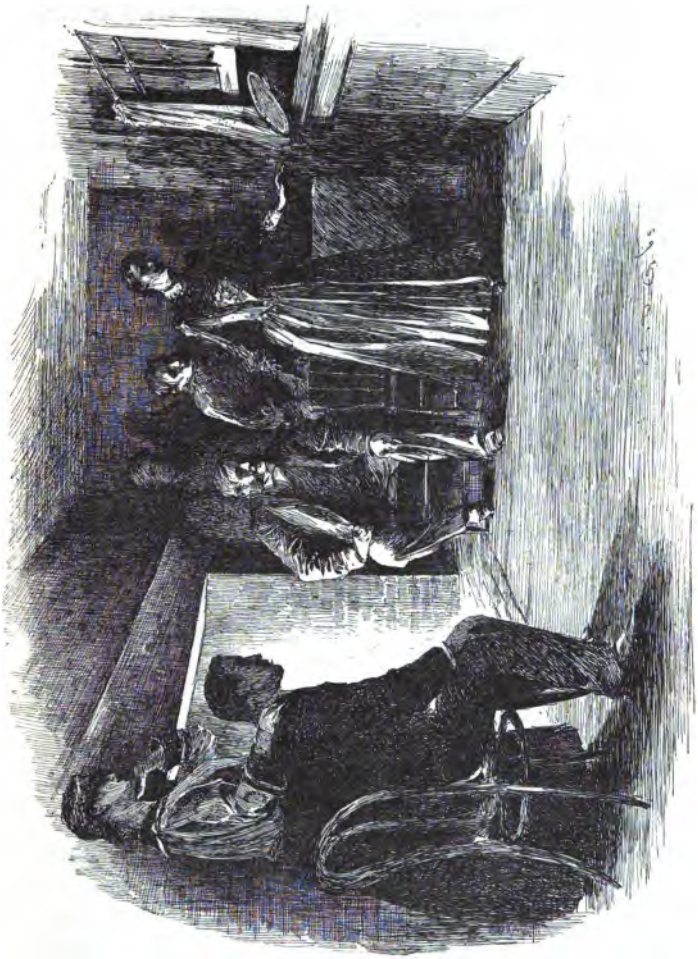
At this moment there was a little noise at one of the windows, and, turning my eyes in that direction, I saw the lower sash raised a couple of inches. I was about to spring towards the window when Doris, who had followed my glance, caught me by the coat.

Instantly we all rose to our feet, and as we looked at the window, beyond which we could see nothing, something like a young moon began to protrude itself through the opening under the sash. In a moment the lunar apparition had greatly increased in size and was a half moon.

Dolor Tripp now made a quick step forward.

"Keep back, all of you," she said. "I know what it is." And going to the window she took hold of the moon, and, drawing it into the room, she held it up to us in all the glory of its fullness.

"A pumpkin pie!" exclaimed Doris.



The Pie Ghost.

We gathered about it. It was of the largest size and as yellow as gold. "Oh, delicious!" cried Doris. "Somebody get a knife."

"But where did it come from?" I asked.

"From the ghost, of course," replied Dolor Tripp. "That is one of its ways. It leaves pies about. Several times when it has locked me into a room I 've just waited quietly until I found the door unfastened, and there outside, just where I would n't step into it, there would be a little pie."

"A lovely ghost!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "I am converted. I believe in him. But this is n't a pie; it 's a tart. Pies are made of meat."

"No, they are not," said the butcher; "at least, not punkin pies. I should think I ought to know what things are made of meat."

"And I ought to know what things are made of fruits and vegetables," retorted Lord Crabstairs. "That is a tart!"

"I 'll toss up to see who is right," said the butcher.

"Done!" said Lord Crabstairs, producing a penny.

"Heads!" cried the butcher.

It was tails.

"All right," said the butcher. "I 'll take some of it, but all the same I never imagined that I should live long enough to eat punkin tart!"

Dolor Tripp quickly cut the pie into six parts, but I would have none of it. I do not believe in ghosts, and will not eat food brought by them. I went to the window and endeavored to raise the sash higher, but could not do so. With all my strength I could not increase the width of the narrow aperture. One

of the shutters was open, but the shadow of the main building and a growth of evergreen bushes made everything dark immediately outside.

I left the window, and walking quietly out of the kitchen into the little hall, I again tried the door at the top of the steps. To my delight it was unfastened. I stepped gently back, and looking in at the kitchen door I caught the eye of the butcher, who was finishing his piece of pie. Without attracting the attention of the others, who were making some fresh tea, he came to me.

I whispered to him to follow. We went up the steps, and through the door. We groped our way along the passage, turned into the main hall, opened the front door, and went out.

"It is no ghost," I said. "Let us go around the house and catch him!"

"I began to have my doubts," said the butcher. "The pie was too real."

As quietly as possible we walked along the front of the house and around the end of it, returning by the back towards the old kitchen. The moon gave us light enough to see our way until we reached the shaded corner by the window; but when we had slowly and gently pushed through the evergreens we found ourselves in almost total darkness, the little light that came from the candle within amounting to almost nothing. But although we could not expect to see an approaching figure, we might hear one, and we stood silently and waited.

But we did not wait long. Down from some region above came a light, misty spot like a will-o'-the-

wisp. When it was about five feet from the ground it moved towards the kitchen window. I do not know what the butcher thought, but at this moment it occurred to me that perhaps after all it might be well not to interfere with this apparition. We really had no right to interfere and we were ourselves intruders upon the premises. And whether it were a ghost, or a man, or a woman, there was something in my nature, naturally sensitive, which prompted hesitation before actively interfering with the pursuits of another.

But I had no time properly to revolve this subject in my mind. The butcher reached out one hand and took me by the coat-sleeve. Following the impulse thus given I moved with him towards the window, our feet making no noise upon the soft grass.

Against the faint light in the room, on the side of the window where the shutter was opened, we could see the top of a strangely formed head raised just high enough above the window-sill to enable its owner to look inside. The ghost was watching our friends!

There was a quick movement of the apparition; the butcher had seized it. In the next instant I also laid hold of it. Within my grasp I felt an arm, a human arm quite firm and solid. Not a word was spoken; there was no struggle, no noise. Silently the butcher and I pulled our captive away from the window, through the overhanging evergreen boughs, and out into the moonlight.

There we discovered that we held a man, quite a small man, with a white cap on his head.

"Well, now," said he, looking from one to the other of us, "you have caught me, have n't you? And I must say you did it pretty neat. I knew it was risky, foolin' with sech a big party, but for the life of me I could n't help it. Never sech a chance turned up before in this house!"

"But who are you?" said I.

"You are a stranger to me," replied the little man, "and you would n't know who I was if I told you. Now, this gentleman knows me, and I know him."

"You don't mean to say," exclaimed the butcher, "that you are —"

"Yes, I am," interrupted the other.

"And you are the ghost?"

"Now, tell me," asked the little man, "did she take me for a ghost? I always hoped she would, but I could n't help feelin' sort of oncertain about it."

"She certainly did," answered the butcher.

"That 's what I call real jolly!" said our prisoner, rubbing his hands. "Let 's go in, and have it all out. I guess I 've served my time as a spook, and might as well come down to the level of common people."

As the butcher had released his hold of our prisoner, I did so likewise. The little man now started off, and went around the house to the front door. We followed, and he led us into the hall and along the passage to the kitchen. Entering abruptly he stopped near the door, and exclaimed in a cheery voice, and without removing his cap: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, here 's your ghost! What do you think of him?"

The party had been anxiously discussing our absence, and Lord Crabstairs and the schoolmaster were about to start out to look for us. They now all stood amazed, gazing wide-eyed at the new-comer.

Suddenly Dolor Tripp stepped forward. "Griscom Brothers!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," said the little man, "I am Griscom Brothers."

"In the name of common sense," said Doris, "please tell me what you two are talking about? Is this the pie ghost?"

"Yes, Madam," said Griscom Brothers. "And not only pie but bread, both wheat and Boston-brown, with rye to order; cakes of all kinds, especially home-made ginger; and family bakings and roasts on reasonable terms. In a word — Griscom Brothers."

"Of the village over here," added Dolor Tripp, in further explanation.

"Griscom Brothers," said the butcher, in a tone of confident affirmation.

All this was as surprising to me as it was to the others. As for Lord Crabstairs, he stood up very straight with his feet wide apart, and stared at Griscom Brothers.

"Now, really!" he exclaimed. "It is Brothers, is it? And the ghost of a baker besides!"

"No, sir," spoke up quickly the little man. "I may be a baker ghost, but I am not the ghost of a baker; not yet."

"Are you two in one?" asked Lord Crabstairs. "If not, where is the other one of you?"

"My brother," said the little man, "who, with me,

gave our business its firm name, has been deceased for a long time."

"Then," said Lord Crabstairs, "Griscom Brothers is half dead, and has a right to be a half ghost."

"Aha!" said the little man. "That 's about right. Half the time I 'm a baker, and half the time a ghost. And now, then, if you folks care to hear all about it, I 'm ready to talk."

"Care to hear!" said Dolor Tripp. "I 'm on pins and needles to hear!"

The fire was now built up afresh, and again we placed ourselves on our chairs, stools, and boxes about the hearth, Griscom Brothers having a place in the middle, between Dolor Tripp and Doris. I happened to notice that in this arrangement the schoolmaster was left out, and was standing back of our half-circle.

But as the schoooolmaster was evidently a humble-minded person and did not appear to object to his position, I thought it wise not to disturb the company by interrupting the story which the baker had just begun.

XIV

WHAT GRISCOM BROTHERS GOT OUT OF A PUMPKIN PIE

BY the bright light of the fire I took a good look at Griscom Brothers. He appeared to be about fifty years old, with a merry countenance, small eyes, grizzly side-whiskers, and below his white paper cap a little curly grizzly hair. It was plain that he liked to talk, and that he was well satisfied with his present position. "Now," said he, looking from side to side, "I know who you all are. You are the people from the schooner out here in the bay: and as I 've told you who I am, we may call ourselves acquainted, and I 'll go on and tell about the ghost business without asking any questions of you; at least not now.

"I 've often noticed," said he, giving himself a little twist in his chair, "that when a man sits down, fair and square, to tell a story, it happens time and again

that the story don't step up to the mark as lively as it ought to, and when it does show itself, it is n't as much of a story as it was expected to be. I should n't wonder if my story should be that way; but I 'll take it by the nape of the neck and bring it right in, and let you folks see all there is of it.

"It was about twelve years ago, when my brother died and my family got to be only me, that I found I did n't get sleep enough. You see that being a baker I am obliged to go to my work very early in the morning, mostly about three o'clock, and that if I don't get a good sleep in the first part of the night, it will tell on me. You know that sort of thing will tell on people. Now the room I slept in after my family became so small was Mrs. Springer's second-floor back, and every Tuesday night the Dorcas Society used to meet there, and them women kept up such a chattering from before dark to nobody knows how late at night, that I might as well try to make good bread of brick clay as to sleep; meaning no offense, of course," —turning from one to the other of the ladies,—"if either of you belongs to a Dorcas Society."

"Which I do not," said Doris; "and if I did I would n't mind."

"Now, you see," continued Griscom Brothers, "when a man loses his night's sleep on one night in the week, he is very like to get into the habit of losing it; that 's what I did, and could n't stand it. At that time this house was empty, the law having not decided who it belonged to, and it came into my head that it would be a good thing to come over here and sleep. There would be no Dorcas Society here, or

anything else to disturb me. So here I came, finding it easy to get in at one of these kitchen windows; and I fixed up a bed in an upper room, and there I could sleep like a toad in a hole. Of course I did n't want to hurt Mrs. Springer's feelings, and I never said nothing to her about my not sleeping in the house. I went upstairs every night at my reg'lar bed-time and I rumpled up the bed and went away, Mrs. Springer not knowing whether I left the house at three o'clock in the morning or nine o'clock at night. You see I 'm very spry at getting about without people seeing me; and to this day Mrs. Springer does n't know that for the last twelve years I have n't slept in her house except on some very stormy nights."

"Paid for your room straight along, I guess," remarked the butcher.

"Yes, sir! As I did n't pay nothing here it was all right I should pay there. Well, after I had kept up this thing for two years, you and your sisters," turning to Dolor Tripp, "came here to live, and then you may be sure I had a hard nut to crack. I had become so accustomed to this big, quiet house that I did n't believe I could sleep under any other roof, and so I said to myself, 'I 'll stay here, and these people sha'n't know it any more than Mrs. Springer does.' There 's a loft over this kitchen which you can't get into except by that trap-door and a ladder, and so before you came here I put the ladder up into the loft, and put a bolt on the other side of the trap-door, which kept me private. I knew you would n't want to use the loft, and I thought I might as well have it as not."

"And you 've been sleeping there for ten years!" exclaimed Dolor.

"That 's about the time," said Griscom Brothers. "I put everything into that room to make myself comfortable,— not your things, but my things,— and I got in and out through a little window in the roof. There are some strips nailed on for a grapevine, and these I use for a ladder. I can go up and down in the darkest night just like stairs. I can get into the house just the same as I used to, because the lock on the back door of the main house is one I put there myself, years ago, and of course I 've got a key to it. Not long after you came I got to going over the house again, principally to see if the doors and windows were all shut and fastened. You was a little girl then, and you had a way of going out of doors after your sisters had gone to bed. You never thought of shutting up when you came back. When you got to be a big girl, and even a young woman, you did the same thing. So I kept on taking care of things."

"It strikes me," said Lord Crabstairs, who had been listening very attentively to the baker's story, "that you had rather an odd way of getting a night's sleep. Rambling through a house and playing ghost is n't the way to refresh a man, I take it."

"Now, you see," said Griscom Brothers, "the p'int of it is this. When I was at Mrs. Springer's I could n't sleep if I wanted to, but in this house I could go to my little room and sleep whenever I felt like it; that makes all the difference in the world."

"Yes," said the butcher; "being able to do a thing

is often just as much good to a person as doing it."

"Now tell me another thing," said Lord Crabstairs. "What did you mean by that pumpkin tart?"

"Tart!" exclaimed the baker.

"That 's all right," said the butcher. "We tossed up, and tart it is."

Griscom Brothers did not seem to understand, but he went on to explain.

"That was an ordered punkin pie. It is n't the season for that sort of thing, and nobody but me has got any punkins kept over. But old Mrs. Gormish ordered the pie for her grandchild's christening, but when they sent for Mr. Black he could n't come, and they had to have Mr. Startling, and he 's a dyspeptic, and so the old lady sent word to me she did n't want no pie, and it was left on my hands. I always like to have something to eat before I start out in the early morning, so I brought this with me, for there is n't no call for such. When you people came into the kitchen I was fast asleep, but I jumped up quick enough and hurried down to see what was the matter. I was at the window seeing and listening to pretty nearly all you did and said; and when I heard you talking about being so hungry I thought of giving you that pie, and I locked the door to keep you in the kitchen until I thought I had done my duty by you."

"You did it well," said Doris. "It was a good pie."

"I dare say," said Lord Crabstairs, "that in this country bakers don't sell meat."

"No," said Griscom Brothers; "as a rule they don't."

"Well, then," said his lordship, "as we are pretty well dried and warmed, and as there is nothing more to eat, we might as well be getting back to the ship."

We all agreed that this was the proper thing to do, and we rose from our seats.

"Before you go," said Griscom Brothers, addressing Dolor Tripp, "I want to settle one thing: Do you object to my staying on in that little loft, or must I go back to Mrs. Springer?"

"I think," said Dolor Tripp, "that it would be much better for you to stay where you are for the present. I am going to Boston, and when I come back I will speak to my sisters about it."

"Then I 'll pack up my goods," said Griscom Brothers, "the day you come back, for I know what your sisters will say."

As the baker finished speaking he turned suddenly, and his eyes fell upon the schoolmaster, who until this moment had been keeping well in the background. For an instant the two gazed steadily at each other, then Griscom Brothers exclaimed,—almost screamed:

"Johnny!"

The schoolmaster, with his long arms extended, rushed upon the other, and in a moment they were folded in a close embrace.

The pie ghost was the schoolmaster's father.

For a few moments nothing was said, and we gazed in amazement upon the embracing couple. Then the butcher beckoned us a little apart and said in a low voice:

"That young man ran away from home more than

twelve years ago. I did n't know him, for all that happened before I came to these parts, but I have often heard the story. I should n't wonder if he has been as much afraid of meeting his dad as of running afoul of Mrs. Bodship."

Griscom Brothers now stepped forward, holding his son by the hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "who could have thought it, that old Mrs. Gormish's punkin pie should have given me back my son! If it had n't been that she threw the pie on my hands I should n't have brought it here, and if it had n't been here I should n't have tried to give it to you, and if I had n't done that you never would have ketched me, and if you had n't ketched me I should n't have known that my Johnny was with you."

"It strikes me," said Lord Crabstairs, "that you ought to thank the clergyman who ate his meals so fast that he gave himself dyspepsia. If he had been able to eat pumpkin tart you would n't have found your son."

"Tart!" ejaculated the baker.

"Tart it is," said the butcher; "tossed up all square. And now I think it is time for us to be moving."

"Johnny," said Griscom Brothers, "won't you stay with me to-night? My bed is wide enough for two."

But the schoolmaster hesitated, and finally said he thought it would be better for him to go back to the ship, for he had certain work to do in the morning.

We should have exclaimed against any ship work taking this new-found son from his father, but it was

quite plain that the schoolmaster did not wish to stay. Perhaps he thought that if he walked across the country in broad daylight and without the protection of our company Mrs. Bodship might pounce upon him in spite of his disguise.

"Very well," said his father. "Perhaps it 's better for you to go; for if you staid here we should talk all night, and neither of us get any sleep."

The schoolmaster now took his butcher's gown from the crane, where in the course of its frequent shiftings it had received a number of broad black stripes, and put it on.

"I suppose there are reasons for your wearing that," said his father, "but I won't ask them now. If you don't sail too early in the morning, I'm coming to see you on board the ship."

"We shall be delighted to have you visit us," cried Doris; "and the ship shall not sail until you arrive."

Preceded by Griscom Brothers, who carried the candle, we now left the kitchen. When we reached the long hallway our leader stopped, and, addressing Dolor Tripp, said that before she went away he would like to show her the picture that her sister was painting of her.

We all declared that we should like to see that picture, and the baker led us into the dining-room.

"You need n't be afraid," he said, as we walked after him, "of waking up Alwilda and Lizeth; I never knew two women sleep like they do. I believe their eyelids shut with a snap at nine o'clock, and open with a click at six in the morning."

The dining-room was large and high, with plain,

smooth walls entirely unadorned except by a row of pictures painted on the smooth plaster, at about the eye-line, and intended to extend all around the room. The line on three of the walls was completed. These pictures had all been painted by Alwilda, and the style of them proved that she had been to a great extent her own teacher. The subjects were various, and some of them quite astonishing. We did not examine the whole gallery, but proceeded to the latest picture, which was yet unfinished.

This painting, about a yard square, represented Dolor Tripp lying drowned by the sea-shore — this being the fate which her sister expected would befall her, while voyaging to Boston. The wretched plight of the recumbent corpse made us shudder, and the subject of the sketch covered her face with her hands.

"It is outrageous! it is shameful!" cried Doris. "Such a thing ought not to be allowed to exist!"

"Which it should n't," said Lord Crabstairs, "if I had a pail of whitewash."

"And a brush," added the butcher.

"I have that," said Doris, who had been looking about her, and had perceived the artist's materials near by.

Doris was an amateur artist, and, moreover, was quick to think and act. With a palette, a few colors, and some brushes, she stood before the picture, Griscom Brothers holding the candle. The pallid features of the drowned maiden soon began to glow with rosy health; her eyes were closed, but it was plain she slept; the sands and shallow water about her changed into soft, green grass, and the tall, slimy weeds which

had thrown themselves about her form were now green, wavy stems with somewhat too brilliant blossoms. Even the rocks were covered with soft moss, and the whole scene changed so rapidly under Doris's brush that we were filled with an admiration we did not hesitate to express.

"I am glad you like it," said Doris. "I 'm sure there 's nothing soaked or dead about Dolor Tripp now."

"When Alwilda Tripp sees that," said Griscom Brothers, "she 'll think there 's been a miracle."

"Which there has been," remarked the butcher; "an out-and-out square miracle."

"I don't know what she 'll think," said Dolor Tripp, "but I know what I think;" and she kissed Doris.

I think we all would have been delighted to be in that room when Alwilda came down in the morning, but we spoke no more upon the subject, and quickly left the house.

"I 'll lock the door and make everything all right," said Griscom Brothers, "and soon after breakfast I shall be down at the shore ready to be took on board."

The schoolmaster picked up his tall silk hat, which still rested on the top of the sandpiper's cage, and put it on; then he took up the cage, looked in at the bird, and was ready to go.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Griscom Brothers, "you look like a holiday butcher that 's been half-broiled. If you are going to slaughter that bird, don't do it until I come in the morning."

We now took leave of the baker and left the yard by the opening in the fence, after which the loose palings were restored to their proper position by

the butcher. Though the moon was bright, we had some difficulty in finding our way on account of the fog which was coming in from the sea; but the butcher was now our guide, and without serious mishap or much detention we reached the shore, where we had left our boat. But when we had embarked we found the fog on the bay so thick that we could not see a boat's length in any direction. The schooner, however, was not far from shore, and we thought we could easily reach her; but in this opinion we were mistaken. We rowed and rowed, and still did not reach the ship. How we could have taken a wrong direction none of us could imagine, but we turned the boat and rowed and rowed again.

"Can it be possible," cried Doris, "that our ship has sailed away?"

"Absolutely impossible!" said the butcher, with much fervency.

We now rowed about, this way and that, for at least half an hour, and I think we all began to be afraid that perhaps we had drifted out to sea. Suddenly the butcher laid down his oars and requested us all to be quiet; then standing up in the boat he flapped his elbows two or three times and gave forth a loud cock-a-doodle-do! There was an instant's silence, and then not far away from the stern of the boat there came an answering cock-a-doodle-do!

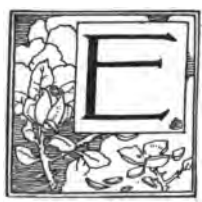
We all knew that this came from the cock in the rigging of the *Merry Chanter*.

In five minutes we were on board.

"Past midnight," said Captain Cyrus, whose watch it was.

XV

WE ARE LOYAL TO THE *MERRY CHANTER*



ARLY the next morning the fog cleared away, and soon after breakfast we heard a hail from the shore.

"It 's father," cried the schoolmaster, who was engaged in giving the usual morning attentions to the sandpiper.

And, sure enough, looking shoreward, we saw Griscom Brothers waving something white in his hand as if it were a flag of truce.

Captain Cyrus went after him in the boat, and very soon the good baker was on board.

Bidding us all a cheery good-morning, he handed the white article to the butcher.

"Here is your gown," he said, "which you left on the grass last night; and it 's a very good thing you did so. If you want to know why, I 'll tell you."

We all wanted to know why, and he told us.

"You see," said he, "we always serve the Tripp family with bread on Saturday morning, and this morning I thought I would deliver it myself. I found Lizeth Tripp at the chicken-yard, and she was looking as if she had had a bad night.

"'Did you sleep well?' I asked, feeling a little nervous, I must say, fearing she had heard something in the night.

"'Oh, I slept well enough,' said she, 'but I 've seen sights this morning.' 'What sights?' says I. 'Just listen,' says she. 'When I opened the window early this morning the first thing that I saw was something white lying flat on the grass, with its long arms stretched out, as if it was dead. It made me jump, I tell you, for at first I thought it was a spirit, but it was so flat and thin that I next thought it was only the skin of a spirit.' 'Which I did n't know they shed them,' says I. 'Nor I neither,' says she. 'But I tell you it frightened me, and I jumped back from that window and went downstairs; and something seemed to move me to go into the dining-room and look at the picture Alwilda was painting, and when I saw it I was struck worse than ever. I tumbled back into a chair, and for ever so long I could n't move for staring. By good luck Alwilda did n't come into the room, being busy with breakfast. And now I have just come out to ask the hired man to take a pitchfork and carry off that skin or whatever it is, but he has gone away, and I 'm mighty glad to see you. I wish you 'd come into the dining-room and look at the picture.' So, as innocent as a lamb, I followed her into the dining-room, and looked at the picture which you, madam, touched up last night. I must say that, seeing it in the daylight, the young woman in the grass looked as if she had died of a raging fever in the middle of a lot of red-hot flowers. 'What 's the matter with it?'

says I, as innocent as if I had n't seen the thing done. 'It 's been changed,' says she. 'It was a picture of a soaked corpse, and now it 's a sleeping beauty; and if the spirit of Dolor Tripp did n't change it, I 'd like to know what spirit did. If she was really lost at sea that 's just the way she 'd come back to comfort us.' 'Now, look here,' says I, 'I don't believe in spirits anyway, and if there was any, they could n't paint.'

"Having been a ghost myself," he said, looking round the company with a smile, "I ought to know what they can do.

"'Now then,' says I to Lizeth Tripp, 'it 's my opinion that your sister Alwilda began to feel bad about this picture, and so she altered it herself. Now if I was you I 'd rub out the whole thing — that is, if it can be rubbed out.' 'I can clean it all off the wall,' says she; 'for I 've often seen Alwilda do that thing when she did n't like a picture, and wanted to paint it over again.' And with that she went and got a steel thing like a hoe, and scraped every scrap of that picture off the smooth wall. 'There should n't be no such picture in the house,' says she, 'whether it 's of a drowned sister, or of one asleep on the broad of her back in the middle of a field; and as fast as Alwilda paints them I 'll scrape 'em out.'

"Now it seems to me," said Griscom Brothers, "that I got us all out of that scrape pretty well."

"That 's your way of looking at it," said Lord Crabstairs; "but it strikes me that Lizeth Tripp is going to get herself into a lot of scrapes if she keeps on scraping out her sister's pictures."

"Well," continued the baker, "there was n't noth-

ing left to clear up but that white thing on the grass, and when I looked at it I told Lizeth it was nothing but a butcher's gown, that most likely had blown over there in the storm. I did n't know it was yours until I picked it up and saw your name on it. So I said I 'd take it away with me; and I left as quick as I could, for I did n't want to have to clear up anything more."

We all agreed that Griscom Brothers had done his part well, and he now retired to the bow of the ship to hold converse with his son.

Dolor Tripp was very anxious that this conversation should be speedily terminated, so that we might sail away. She feared that if there should be a quarrel between Alwilda and Lizeth on account of the one scraping out the pictures of the other, it might become necessary for her to go home and act as peacemaker; but if she were actually on her way to Boston, this would not be possible.

Captain Timon, however, assured her there was no hurry, and that Griscom Brothers would have time to talk with his son as long as he liked.

In half an hour the baker left us.

"I don't suppose you 'll sail on Sunday," he said; "and if you don't get off to-day, I 'll come on board again to-morrow."

"We shall never sail on Sunday," said the butcher, speaking very positively indeed.

I looked at the butcher, and he looked at me, and we both looked at Captain Timon, who looked out over the sea.

We did not sail on Sunday, and on Monday evening

Doris took me aside for what she called a serious conversation.

"It seems to me," she said, "that as owners of this ship we are not doing our duty by our passengers. The butcher came on board and paid his passage to Boston; we are not taking him to Boston. Lord Crabstairs came on board to go to Boston; he paid his passage, and we are not taking him there. The schoolmaster came on board to go somewhere, and we are not taking him anywhere. It is true he paid for no passage; but we promised to take him to Boston, and we are not taking him. Dolor Tripp is worse off than the others, because she is really afraid that if we do not soon start something will make it necessary for her to go home. As for ourselves, we have taken our chances, and must be content; and as to the four captains, they also have taken their chances. They undertook to sail the *Merry Chanter* to Boston, and if they are delayed on the voyage it is no more our affair than it is theirs. But when people pay money for their passage it is a different matter."

I had been fishing that day with Lord Crabstairs, and had had very good luck. I expected to go out again the next day, and I said to Doris that for the present I thought we were all very well off as we were.

"I am very well satisfied to wait," said Doris, "for it is very pleasant here and our living is certainly cheap; but that has nothing to do with our duty towards our passengers."

"What can we do for them?" I asked.

"We can do one of two things," answered Doris.

"We can pay them back their passage money, or send them to Boston by rail."

"Either one of those things would be pretty hard on us," I said, "especially after having boarded and lodged them all this time."

"That has nothing to do with it," said Doris. "Justice is justice, and we should not take their money and keep them waiting and waiting here for an exceptional high tide."

I reflected a few moments. "It would be well," I said, "to find out what they think about it. Let us call a meeting of the ship's company."

"Good!" cried Doris; "and you must preside. You are the proper person to take the chair."

After supper the meeting was called, and the whole population of the ship, including Griscom Brothers,— who had come on board for an evening visit,— attended.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said I,— and the moment I had uttered these words I knew that I had made a mistake. I should have said "shipmates," or something of that sort, but I went on,— "my wife and I have concluded that we are not doing our duty by you. We do not know exactly when we shall be able to sail, and we have thought that it might be better to send you to Boston by the railroad."

At this a little murmur seemed to run through the company, and Doris interrupted me.

"My husband does not mean," she said, "that we have decided to send you to Boston by rail. What we desire is, to give you an opportunity of expressing your feelings in regard to the situation. You have

paid your money, and you are entitled to a passage on this ship to Boston; but if you think you would rather not wait any longer, we will consult together and see what it will be best to do. It may be that you would like to go to Boston by rail."

At this another murmur, louder than the first, was heard from the company, and the butcher rose to his feet.

"Is a motion in order?" he asked.

"Yes," said Doris.

I felt that I was presiding over this meeting in rather an odd way, but the oddity did not seem to strike any one else, and the butcher put his motion.

"I move that we stick to the ship," said he.

Lord Crabstairs leaned towards Dolor Tripp. "What do you think about it?" he asked.

"If I do not go to Boston in this ship," she answered, "I shall not go at all."

"Second the motion," called out Lord Crabstairs.

"Before the motion is put," said Doris, "we ought to hear what the captains have to say about it."

The four captains stood in a row on the starboard side of the deck. Being older and more accustomed to speak, Captain Timon spoke for his fellow-mariners.

"Well," said he, "each of us put some money into this venture, and of course we don't want to lose it. If we don't get to Boston our money is lost. If that money is lost, we want to be able to say that it was n't lost because we gave up the v'yage too soon, but we want to be able to say it was lost because a gale of wind an' a high tide did n't come into Shankashank Bay together. Of course that gale an' that tide may

never come in together, but we 're in favor of givin' them a leetle longer chance. A good many things in this world would do a sight better than they do do if they had a leetle longer chance. So we four are in favor of stickin' to the ship."

He looked at his companions, and each one gave an affirmative nod.

The question was put, and it was unanimously resolved to stick to the ship.

"Three cheers!" cried Doris. And the ship's company gave three hearty cheers.

During the meeting Griscom Brothers had neither voted nor spoken, but he cheered with the others.

"Not being an owner, a passenger or a captain," said he, "of course this is n't my business, but I 'm mighty glad to see you 're going to stand by the ship. It is n't everybody that 's got a ship to stand by. That 's what I said to my Johnny. 'Stand by the ship. If you 're going to Boston, go. When you come back, I 'll take you into the baking business, or you can keep on with your schoolmastering; but whatever you do, you must stick to it.' That 's what I said to my Johnny. And now I say to the rest of you, if you don't sail to-morrow morning I 'll drop in and see you in the afternoon."

"It 's my opinion," said the butcher to us when Griscom Brothers had gone on shore, "that the schoolmaster would rather go to baking than go to sea, but he 's afraid to show himself on land till his father has settled matters with Mrs. Bodship. If any man can do it Griscom Brothers can do it, and he 's promised to try."

XVI

DOLOR TRIPP SETS SAIL

HE very next day a gale came into the bay with a flood tide; but although the wind was strong enough to stir up a very fine storm, it did not blow enough water into the bay to float the *Merry Chanter*.

Our four captains were all ready to take advantage of the first indication that our ship was free to ride the waves; but no such indication came.

"I'm afraid she's voted to stick to the sand bar," said the butcher, when the tide began to ebb.

With this exception, none of us showed any signs of giving up hope. There would be another high tide in twelve hours, and the gale might increase in violence.

But although the storm did not move our ship, it greatly delighted some of our company. The bow of the vessel pointed out towards the sea, and for nearly the whole day one or the other of the ladies stood there enjoying the storm. When Doris occupied this post I was with her, and when Dolor Tripp was there the butcher stood on one side of her and Lord Crabstairs on the other.

They could have had no better opportunity of thoroughly enjoying the storm. The waves rolled in, sometimes dashing up to the very feet of the figure of the Merry Chanter, and sometimes throwing the spray over his head and into our faces. The wind whistled through the cordage and blew the cock from the rigging. Fortunately he alighted upon the deck, where he had not set foot since he had been brought to the ship, and he ran screaming and flapping to the coops where the other fowls were sheltered.

It seemed to me that Doris and Dolor Tripp could not get enough of this turmoil of the elements.

"To see it all and be in it," said Doris, when we had gone down to the cabin for a brief rest; "to feel the storm and not to be afraid of it; to look upon the rolling, tossing waves and yet feel the deck as immovable as a floor beneath our feet; to fancy we hear the Merry Chanter shouting his sea-songs into the very teeth of the storm — it is grand! it is glorious! and it is perfectly safe!"

For my part I very soon got enough of the turmoil of the elements, and I fancy that the butcher and Lord Crabstairs were satisfied as easily as I was; but, although I frequently entreated Doris to shorten the time of her observations at the bow, I do not believe that the supporters of Dolor Tripp gave the least sign that they did not like the sea wind almost to take away their breath, or the sea water to dash into their faces and drench their clothes. The young woman was enveloped in a waterproof cloak and hood; and although the butcher possessed a garment of this kind, he would not put it on, because by so doing he

would have confessed himself less able to endure bad weather than Lord Crabstairs, who had forgotten to provide a mackintosh for the voyage.

Once I proposed to Doris to allow the schoolmaster to have the pleasure of gazing at the storm with her, but she indignantly repudiated the proposition.

"Look at those two men," she said; "do they flinch from the side of the woman they love?"

And of course after that I had nothing more to say about a substitute.

The storm did not increase in violence, but gradually subsided, and the next day was pleasant and clear. Doris occupied herself with her little chicks. The schoolmaster opened the cage of the sandpiper, which had become quite tame, and allowed the bird to take a constitutional upon the deck. The cock flew back to his old position in the rigging and crowed aloud his satisfaction at again feeling himself above us all. Everything seemed to be going on in the same quiet and pleasant methods to which we had become accustomed before the gale had tantalized us with a half hope of Boston.

But in fact everything was not going on quietly and pleasantly. Lord Crabstairs and the butcher were unquiet and unpleasant; that is, to each other. By the advice of Captain Timon they had established a system in regard to Dolor Tripp. After breakfast one of them would take the first watch, and at the end of an hour would relinquish his position by her side to the other. When the second watch of an hour had ended, each of the men would give the lady an hour to herself, thus allowing her to

be undisturbed until noon; after dinner each man went on watch for an hour, and then Dolor Tripp had two hours to herself. After supper there were no watches, because Captain Timon declared that as long as he commanded the ship he would see no woman overworked.

But this apparently amicable arrangement did not serve its purpose. It gave each man a fair chance, but each man wanted more. They had become of little social advantage to us, for the one who happened to be off duty was inclined to be silent and was continually looking at his watch.

As for Dolor Tripp herself, Doris and I could see no reason to suppose that she liked one man better than the other. With Crabstairs she was lively and beaming, and apparently delighted that it was his watch. With the butcher she was lively and beaming, and delighted that he was on duty.

"What 's wanted on this ship," said Captain Timon to us, "is one man less, or one woman more. If each of them fellers had a gal it 'd be all right, but one gal is n't enough for two of 'em."

"What would you do about it?" asked Doris, who was beginning to be disturbed at the turn things had taken.

"I 'd chuck one of them overboard," said the captain, "an' let him swim ashore."

"Which one would you chuck?" I asked.

"The Englishman," said the captain. "If I've got to haul down any flag, I'd haul down the Union Jack before the Stars and Stripes."

"That would n't be fair," said Doris. "One has just as much right as the other."

"I suppose that 's so," said Captain Timon, with a grin; "an' as we can't chuck the young woman overboard, I guess we 'll have to let the matter settle itself."

"It seems to me," said I, when the captain had left us, "that a marriage with a British peer would be of much more advantage than a marriage with a butcher."

"I don't agree with you," said Doris. "Lord Crabstairs has repudiated his peerage, and the butcher has repudiated his butcherage; they now stand on equal ground. Before Lord Crabstairs was overtaken and crushed by his title he was quite as free and independent a man as the butcher is, and now that he has escaped from his peerage he is again just as good as the butcher. He has told us he has a small income not derived from his father's family, and the butcher has saved money, so in every way they are even, and Dolor Tripp ought to be allowed to take her choice between them."

"The trouble will be," said I, "to induce her to make a choice. I think she likes to have two men courting her, and the affair will probably end in a fight on the *Merry Chanter*."

"I don't believe it," exclaimed Doris. "Neither of those men would so far forget himself as to fight on my ship."

"Your ship!" I said.

"Oh, I meant to say ours," she answered.

The next day the butcher took the first watch with Dolor Tripp. At eight o'clock precisely he offered her his arm, and invited her to walk the deck with

him. I noticed that his face wore a serious expression, and that he was extremely deferential and polite to his companion, guiding her carefully around the wet places on deck, which were still damp from the morning's swabbing, and apparently paying the strictest attention to what she might be saying, as if he was anxious not to lose a word of her sweet speech.

In the mean time Lord Crabstairs appeared to be in a very unquiet mood. He was restless and excited, and finally filled his pockets with corn and ran up into the rigging, where he fed the cock, who for some time had been crowing for his breakfast. The moment that the butcher's watch had come to an end Lord Crabstairs scuttled down the rope ladder so fast that we were afraid he would slip and break his neck. In an instant he was at the side of Dolor Tripp, and giving her his arm, rapidly conducted her to the bow of the ship, this portion of the deck being now untenanted. The butcher walked slowly towards us as we sat in our customary seats at the stern.

"You are going to lose a passenger," he said.

"Which one?" we cried.

"That depends on circumstances," said the butcher. "You see I made up my mind last night that things could n't go on as they were going on, and so right after breakfast I proposed to him that we should toss up and decide which should put the question to her. We 'd agreed that neither of us should do that without giving the other notice. He was ready, quick as lightning, and we tossed. He called 'heads,' and heads it was twice. And he 's got her."

"But she may not accept him," cried Doris.

"Oh, she 'll take him; there 's no doubt about that," said the butcher looking solemnly down at the deck. "If he proposes first she 'll take him, and if I had proposed first she would have taken me. Neither of us had any doubt on that point."

Fifteen minutes later no one on board could have had any doubt on that point, for Lord Crabstairs and Dolor Tripp walked towards us, the one with a downcast, blushing face, and the other with the most beaming, joy-lighted countenance I ever saw.

"You see," said Lord Crabstairs, "we have just stepped aft to announce our engagement. We did n't think it exactly the square thing in a small party like this to keep dark about it even for a short time."

"As if you could do it!" cried Doris. And then we congratulated the happy couple, the butcher shaking hands with each of them with a degree of earnest solemnity not common on such occasions.

Lord Crabstairs and his lady-love now went below to acquaint the schoolmaster and the four captains with what had occurred.

"And now," said Doris to the butcher, "what were you going to say about our losing a passenger?"

"Well," said he, "if they stay on board I go, but if they go ashore I 'll stay here. I don't want to go back on my word about sticking to the ship, but circumstances often give a new twist to things."

"Indeed they do," said Doris, speaking in a very sympathetic tone and offering her hand to the butcher.

"I 'm mighty glad of it," said Captain Cyrus to us a little while afterwards. "I don't know when I 've

heard anythin' that 's pleased me better. For the life of me I could n't see how they were goin' to get out of that fix without its endin' in a row. It was only yesterday, madam, that I thought that if you was only disengaged it would be all right, for then there would be two young women, one for each of them; but you was settled for, and there was only one young woman for the two men. But now it 's all straightened out and we can have peace on board."

I wish here to record the fact that from that moment I never made a voluntary observation to Captain Cyrus Bodship.

XVII

HOW LIZETH AND ALWILDA TOOK IT

HEN Griscom Brothers came on board that afternoon and heard the news he was delighted.

"I thought it would come to that," he said. "Title is bound to get ahead of meat. And what do the happy lovers intend to do? Will they remain on board and go to Boston?"

"No," said Doris; "they leave us this afternoon. Dolor Tripp is in her cabin packing her trunk. She will go home to her sisters, and Lord Crabstairs will lodge in the village, where he can go and see her every day. They are to be married as soon as possible."

"I am mighty glad," said Griscom Brothers, "that Dolor Tripp is going home; she 's needed there. Ever since Lizeth scraped out Alwilda's picture them two sisters have n't spoke. That sort of thing has happened before. As much as six weeks or two months has passed without either of them speaking a word to each other, and at such times Dolor has to be a sort of go-between to tell one what the other wants. They 've had a pretty tough pull of it this time without her."

"What do they do," I asked; "make signs to each other?"

"No," said the baker. "When one of them has to ask something of the other, she goes out to the hired man and tells him to go into the house and speak to her sister. But his boots are so dirty that they never do this unless they are positively obliged to. Lizeth told me that yesterday she was nearly starving for butter because she could n't make up her mind to tell that man to ask Alwilda where she had put the milk-house key."

Dolor Tripp now came on deck ready to go ashore, and in a few moments Lord Crabstairs appeared, glowing with ruddy joy, and loaded with a huge valise, a bundle of rugs, a hat-box, and a collection of umbrellas and canes.

Their intention was to go together and acquaint the sisters of Dolor Tripp with what had happened, and ask their blessing. Doris thought it was the proper thing for her to go with Dolor, and as it promised to be an interesting occasion I thought it the proper thing to go with Doris. Griscom Brothers said that on his way to the village he could stop at the Tripp house just as well as not, and that he would do it; whereupon the schoolmaster remarked that as the party would be so large he would not be afraid to go with them himself. At first the butcher seemed inclined to stay on board, but after taking me aside and remarking that if he did not go with us it might look as if he were showing bad feeling in the matter, he joined the party.

Only the four captains remained on the *Merry*

Chanter. These faithful mariners must be at their posts in case the exceptional wind and the exceptional tide came into the bay together.

Our boat had to make two trips before we were all landed, and then we walked to the house. Griscom Brothers and the schoolmaster carried the huge valise, in order that Lord Crabstairs could give one arm to his lady-love; and the butcher, to his honor be it said, relieved his late rival of the hat-box and the package of umbrellas and canes. Dolor Tripp said she could send the hired man for her baggage.

We found Lizeth in the poultry-yard.

"Lizeth," said Dolor Tripp, blushing a little, "this is Lord Crabstairs."

"Lord which?" exclaimed Lizeth.

"Crabstairs," replied her sister; "and we are going to be married."

Lizeth looked at them in astonishment. "You two!" she exclaimed.

"Only the two of us," said Dolor. "And I want you to like him, Lizeth; you ought to like your brother-in-law."

"Do you mean to say," said Lizeth, speaking slowly, "that this man is a sure-enough foreign lord?"

"Yes," said her sister; "he's an out-and-out peer of the British realm."

Lizeth looked as if she were going to whistle, but she did not.

"It is a fair and square thing for me to say," remarked Lord Crabstairs, "that I am a lord against my will, and my title brings me no property except two centuries of debts."

"But you really are an English nobleman?" asked Lizeth.

"Yes," said Lord Crabstairs, "I am."

Lizeth now looked steadfastly at her sister and at the sturdy Englishman by her side. Then she looked at the rest of us, and then spoke.

"I don't believe in monarchies," she said, "nor in kings, nor in crowns and scepters, nor in aristocracies, nor in peers and realms. I am a plain, free-born, independent republican, and look down upon empires and thrones. My ancestors did not come over in the *Mayflower*, but I am quite sure that they came in a plain, wooden ship, and did n't put on any airs. As I said before, I 've nothing to do with peers and peeresses, nor kings and queens. I am a free-born American, and a free-born American I shall die, but if he really is a lord I suppose he can have you." At this Dolor Tripp hung upon her sister's neck and kissed her, and then we all went to make the announcement to Alwilda.

We found the elder sister in the dining-room painting a picture upon the wall. She was at work upon a small blue house, surrounded by flowers and shrubberies of the brightest and gayest colors. Birds with brilliant plumage were flying through the air; there was a sunset glow in the sky; and a young woman with a red shawl and a yellow petticoat was playing a harp in the foreground.

Dolor Tripp was so struck by this work of art that she was obliged to satisfy her curiosity about it before stating the object of her visit.

"What in the world is that, Alwilda?" she exclaimed.

"That," said the artist, stepping back from the wall, but taking no notice of the presence of our party, "is a home in the midst of all sorts of things that are joyful to look at or to listen to or to smell; but, in spite of all that, the person that lives in the house is blue, and everything in it is blue, and the very house itself is blue."

"Do you live in that house?" asked her sister.

"At present I do," was the answer.

"Well, I am come to make your house a livelier color," said Dolor Tripp. "Alwilda, this is Lord Crabstairs."

The tall woman turned the front of her black-and-white sunbonnet upon his lordship. "What does he want," she said; "some more chickens?"

"No," said Dolor Tripp; "he wants me."

Alwilda looked steadfastly at the couple, now holding each other by the hand.

"A lord?" she said.

"Yes," said her sister; "really and truly an English lord."

"You are quite sure," asked Alwilda, "that he is n't a German count?"

"Of course not," replied her sister, hotly.

"Or a Spanish duke?" asked Alwilda.

"Ridiculous!" said Dolor. "How could he be?"

"Or a Highland chief, or an African king?" asked the other.

And at this we all laughed.

"Well," said Alwilda, "they are just as likely to say they are one of these things as another, and I don't suppose it makes much difference which it is.

But if you two are really going to be married there is one thing I want to ask you. When you set up housekeeping, do you intend to have one single bedstead, and no more, in your spare room?"

"What in the world do you mean by that?" cried her sister.

"I mean," said the other, "that I want to know, when I come to see you, if I'm to have the spare room all to myself, or if there's to be somebody else there at the same time with me. If she's to be there," motioning out of doors, "at the same time that I am, then I don't want to go, and I don't want to have anything to do with your marrying, or your housekeeping. But if I'm to have the room to myself, then I suppose there's nothing more to be said."

"You shall have it," cried Lord Crabstairs. "I shall have a bedstead built, in which there shall not be room for two fishing-rods."

"Then, Alwilda," cried Dolor Tripp, "you approve of our marriage?"

"It's better than drowning," said her sister. "And taking it all in all," she continued, after a little reflection, "I'm rather glad you wanted to marry a foreigner. Americans are too uppish; but when you get hold of a man that is accustomed to being downtrodden, it's easy to keep him so."

At this Lord Crabstairs roared with laughter till the ceiling echoed, and we all joined in.

Alwilda did not smile, but looked from one to the other, and when the laughter had ceased she asked Griscom Brothers how much she owed him for bread.

The merry baker declared he did not carry his

account with him, and then Lord Crabstairs stepped forward and spoke.

"I wish you to understand, madam," he said to Alwilda, "that your sister is not marrying a rich lord. My income is a very small one, and I shall be obliged to go into some work or other to support myself and my wife."

"Oh, money does n't matter," said Alwilda, turning towards her picture. "Dolor has money."

"I 'd like to know where," exclaimed her youngest sister.

"In the bank," said Alwilda; "gathering interest."

"And you never told me!" cried Dolor Tripp, excitedly.

"Why should I?" answered Alwilda. "What call had you for money? When you should come of age you were to have it, or when you should marry you were to have it. Now you and your African king will have it."

The statement that Dolor Tripp was possessed of a fortune, though probably a small one, created a profound sensation among us, and our congratulations were warm and sincere. We were about to depart when Doris addressed Alwilda.

"I would like very much to know," she said, "whether or not you now intend to alter the color of the house in your picture?"

"Well," said Alwilda, meditatively, "I think I shall paint the roof red, but I shall wait to see how things turn out before I change the color of the rest of the house."

"I tell you what it is," said Griscom Brothers, when

we were outside, and he and Lord Crabstairs were starting for the village, "there will soon be an end to them two sisters keeping mum to each other. There 's nothing on earth could keep them from talking about Dolor's getting married."

It was late in the evening when we reached the *Merry Chanter*, and our supper was much less lively than when Dolor Tripp and Lord Crabstairs were with us.

"I had begun to feel satisfied to wait here," said Doris, when we had gone on deck; "but now I am sure I shall feel lonely, and I think we must ask the captains to do their very best to leave the bay and start for Boston, even if the tide and wind do not exactly suit."

"Yes," said I; "we 'll talk to them in the morning."

"What do you think about it?" she said to the butcher.

"Well," he answered, "I don't know that it 's my place to give advice."

"You 're too modest," said Doris.

Shortly after this the butcher took the opportunity to speak to me privately.

"If I were to marry that young woman who 's left us," said he, "and she was on board this ship, and worrying and hankering to start for Boston, it strikes me I would tell her all about the sand bank and the barnacles and the seventy cart-loads of paving stones in the hold."

I looked at him severely. "But you are not married to her," I said; "and not being married, you do not know what a married person should say to the person to whom he is married."

To this the butcher made no reply.

XVIII

THE CAPTAINS SPEAK

HE next morning Doris spoke her mind to the captains.

"We must do something," she said. "If we can't do one thing, let us do another. We must set sail for Boston without delay."

"Madam," said Captain Garnish, "Dolor Tripp's trunk is still on board, and no matter what happens, we cannot sail until she sends for that."

Doris stamped her foot impatiently.

"What a thing to wait for!" she said.

Half an hour afterwards a man with a cart appeared on the shore, and hailing the ship, he shouted lustily that he had come for a trunk. Two of the captains took the trunk to him in the boat, and when they returned we noticed that each of them heaved a little sigh.

"Now the last link is broken," remarked Doris.

"There are some links," said the butcher, "that are mighty hard to break."

Doris looked at him compassionately. She thought he referred to the link between himself and Dolor

Tripp, but I knew that he meant the link between the bottom of the *Merry Chanter* and the sand bank.

It was now plain to me that the captains felt that matters had come to a crisis, and that they must either do something or say something. For an hour they held a conference in the forecastle, and then they came aft in a body.

Captain Timon, being the oldest, spoke first.

"We captains," said he, "have been considerin' a lot about this ship, an' as the owners, an' perhaps the passengers that are left, may be gettin' a little worried at the longishness of our v'yage to Boston, we feel — an' it 's no more than right to let 'em know it — that sailin' to Boston in this vessel is n't what we call plain sailin'. This is an old vessel, an' she 's been lyin' in the dock so long that her hull is a good deal more barnacle than it is timber. Now it 's pretty nigh impossible to sail a ship when her hull is more than half barnacles. Of course most of the barnacles could be scraped off at low tide, but if we did that we 'd open the seams of the old schooner, an' she 'd leak like a flour-sieve."

"Why did n't you tell us this before?" cried Doris, indignantly.

"Well," said Captain Timon, slowly, "you was the owners, an' you wanted to go to Boston, an' we would have sailed you there if we could have done it."

"And there 's another thing," said Captain Garnish. "Them pavin' stones in the hold is too heavy for this vessel; they sink her too deep. Of course we could go to work and throw them out, but I 've followed the sea pretty nigh all my life, and I know that it would n't

be safe to take this schooner outside the bay with a pound less ballast in her than she 's got in her now."

"This should certainly have been told to us," said Doris, very sternly.

"There 's another p'int," said Captain Teel, "that might be overlooked by people that ain't sailors. This ship is short-handed. Of course there 's enough of us aboard to sail her in fair weather, and when we cleared for Boston we thought that the spell of fine weather we was then havin' would more than likely last to the end of the v'yage. But there 's no knowin' what sort of weather we are likely to have now, and if we was to be beatin' up the coast in a heavy gale, and if one of us was to be at the wheel, and another on the lookout, and another castin' the lead, and another battenin' down the for'ard hatches, it stands to reason that there would n't be nobody to take in the topsels."

Doris was flushed with anger, and I was on the point of bursting out into uncontrollable vituperation, when Captain Cyrus, with a smiling face and pleasant voice, spoke up.

"What we cap'ns want to do," said he, "is to be fair all 'round. We want to be fair to you, and fair to ourselves. Now here 's Cap'n Timon, Cap'n Garnish, and Cap'n Teel, that 's all got houses of their own, which they 've let furnished by the month to summer visitors. Now if we had sailed straight from Mooseley to Boston we 'd have been there and back before the month was out and these three cap'ns could have been on hand to collect the advance rent for another month, either from them tenants or some

others. But as things is, and is likely to be, it don't stand to reason that we can get to Boston and back before the end of the month. Now I am not speakin' for myself, but for my mates. I 've got a house and it 's furnished, but I can't let it, for there is no knowin' what time Mrs. Bodship might want to come there, and it would n't do for her to find a tenant in it. So you see it 's not my interests I 'm speakin' for."

Doris could not say a word, but my anger broke forth.

"You miserable, old, salt-pickled fishermen!" said I, "why don't you speak the truth and be done with it? You know that you have run our vessel aground and you can't get her off. I could have sailed her better myself."

Captain Garnish advanced with flashing eye and clenched fist.

"Young man," he roared, "if you had n't your wife with you, I 'd show you the difference between a pickled fisherman and a live clam!"

The butcher now stepped boldly between the captains and the owners.

"No more of this," he said. "I am only a passenger, but so long as I am on this ship there 'll be no fighting on board of her."

The butcher owned a cleaver, and his words were respected.

Doris rushed down to her cabin, where she burst out crying, and I followed her. We had rather a doleful time together; but after a while we heard the cheery voice of Griscom Brothers, who had come on board for his daily visit, and we went on deck. After

his usual hearty salutations to us all, the baker addressed the butcher:

"Lord Crabstairs sent a message to you. He said he has n't no use for chickens now. He told me to tell you that, expecting to spend most of his spare time till he gets married in going backward and forward between the village and the Tripps' house, he makes a present of all his poultry to you, knowing that you will take good care of it."

"If Lord Crabstairs thinks," said the butcher, "that what has happened is going to be covered up by nine full-grown hens and a year-old cockerel, he has mistaken his man; but if he just wants to give them to me as plain fowls from one man to another, I 'll take them and send him thanks."

"That 's what he meant," cried Griscom Brothers. "He as much as said so to me; and so you can just pitch in and feed them, for they are yours."

Looking about him as he was speaking, Griscom Brothers perceived that something had happened, and that all was not right with us. He was about to speak, when I led him aside and explained the situation.

"That 's a pity; that 's a great pity," said he, shaking his head. "It 's a bad thing to have ill-feeling break out among people who are voyaging together on a ship, but we must see what can be done to straighten out matters."

Before, however, he could offer any suggestions to this end, the butcher came aft with a message from the four captains. I was not on very good terms with the butcher, but he spoke pleasantly to me as

well as to Doris. He informed us that the captains had decided that, on the morrow, they would return to their homes by land in order to attend to their private affairs. If, after the end of the month, it should be considered advisable not to endeavor to take the *Merry Chanter* to Boston, they would be content with their share of the money paid by the passengers, and would relinquish all further claims upon the schooner.

"In that case," said Doris, "we must go on shore, also."

"It is base conduct on the part of the captains," said I. "I do not object to go on shore, but I object to being forced to do so by their desertion of our ship."

"The ship shall not be deserted," said the butcher. "I shall remain on board. I have all my belongings here, and I am very comfortable. I have my poultry to take care of and plenty of things to do; and as I can go on shore in the boat whenever I feel like it, I am not afraid to be here without sailors, for I don't believe any storm that could come into this bay could move the *Merry Chanter*. However, I shall keep the anchor out, for the sake of appearances. It does n't mean any more than 'esquire' to a man's name, but it looks well. Now how does that plan strike the owners?"

Doris declared that if the butcher really desired to stay on the ship, we should be very glad to have him do so.

"In that case," said Griscom Brothers, "if you want Johnny to stay with you, he can do it; but if

you don't want him, I 'll take him home and set him to baking. It is time he was in some solid business. And as for you, Madam, and your husband, if you want to stay around in this neighborhood, there is the Tripp house. There 's plenty of room in it, and I believe Alwilda and Lizeth would like you to board with them for a while."

"That would suit me exactly," said Doris. "I wish to be somewhere where I can see the *Merry Chanter* whenever I choose to go and look at it."

"Which is quite natural," said Griscom Brothers; "and we had better call this business settled. And now I 'll go ashore, and engineer the matter with Alwilda and Lizeth. I know I can do it."

The next day the four captains, being ready to go before we were, came in a body to take leave of us.

"We don't want to go away," said Captain Timon, speaking for the others, "without sayin' to you both that we part, on our side, quite friendly. Bygones is bygones. If we could have got you to Boston, we would have got you there, an' been glad of it. But we could n't and we did n't, so there 's an end of it. If you ever get your ship floated, an' towed into fresh water where her barnacles would drop off, an' have her fitted up so that she won't need so many pavin' stones, we might be willin' to ship on her again, an' see what we could do to get her to Boston for you. But till that time comes, we bid you good-by. An' here 's our hands, wishin' you good luck an' lots of it."

Doris shed some tears as she shook hands with the four old mariners; and although my sense of per-

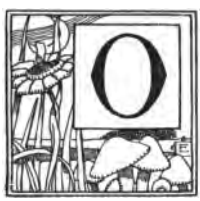
sonal dignity demanded that I should not take their hands, I did so for fear of further annoying my wife.

In the afternoon Doris and I also left our ship,— temporarily, as my wife earnestly declared, — and repaired to the house of the Tripp sisters, who were perfectly willing to accommodate us until we determined what it should be best for us to do.

The schoolmaster went home with his father, who vowed to protect him against Mrs. Bodship at all hazards; and the butcher was left alone on board the *Merry Chanter.*

XIX

HORRIBLE SEA-WEEDS FLAP OVER HER



UR days with the Tripp family passed pleasantly enough. I went fishing, and sometimes Doris went with me. Doris went sketching, and sometimes I went with her. Dolor Tripp was in high spirits, and her sister Lizeth developed quite a pleasant humor. Lord Crabstairs spent every day, and the greater part of every evening, in the company of his beloved one; and, consequently, he was a good deal in our company, and seldom failed to make things lively in one way or another.

Griscom Brothers was a regular visitor. He had not yet arranged to leave his quarters over the old kitchen, and generally spent the nights there, giving up his room in the village to his son. He did not altogether relinquish his line of business as a ghost, especially when he had reason to believe that on account of moonlight walks or late departure of a visitor some outer door had been left unfastened. In his wanderings about the house he frequently deposited some delicacy in his line at the door of the room occupied by Doris and myself, and I am sure that in

this regard Dolor Tripp was not forgotten. The butcher could be depended upon for a visit at least every second day. Occasionally the schoolmaster came, but he was a quiet man who did not care to do much walking about the country.

In about ten days after our arrival, Dolor Tripp and Lord Crabstairs were married. A clergyman came over from the village, and we had a very pleasant little wedding, which was made more cheerful by Alwilda, who, as soon as the ceremony was completed, proceeded at once to the dining-room, and changed the color of the blue house in her latest picture to bright yellow with scarlet window-frames. After a banquet, in which the talent of Griscom Brothers shone to marvelous effect, the happy couple proceeded on their wedding trip.

About a week after the wedding, Doris and I were down at the edge of Shankashank Bay. Across the stretch of water that separated the *Merry Chanter* from the shore Doris and the butcher were holding a high-pitched conversation, when this voice-destroying dialogue was cut short by the arrival of a boy in a funny little cart resembling a wooden wash-basin on wheels, who brought us a telegram from the nearest station. The message was from Montreal, at which place we knew the newly married couple intended making a considerable stay. It was from the young bride, and it read thus:

"I am shipwrecked, and lying drowned upon the shore, cold and dead. Horrible sea-weeds flap over me. He will write.— DOLOR."

With pallid cheeks Doris and I read this again and

again, but what it meant we could not divine. We knew it meant misery of some sort, but what sort of misery neither of us could imagine. At last, not knowing what to do, we determined to take the butcher into our confidence, and hailed him to come ashore. In a few minutes his boat grated upon the sand.

He read the telegram, and looked as black as night. Doris whispered in my ear: "He must not go back after his cleaver. We must not let him do that!" In a few moments, however, the storm-clouds on the face of the butcher began to disappear.

"At first I thought," he said, "that that man had deceived her; that he's not a lord. But, considering that he did n't want to be a lord, and put on no airs about it, I don't believe the trouble is there."

"But where is it?" said I.

The butcher shook his head.

"It's no use going to them," he said, "until we know what has happened. We must wait for the letter."

"Do you think of going to them?" asked Doris in surprise.

"Certainly," said the butcher; "if I am needed."

That was a doleful day for us. We felt obliged to tell the Tripp sisters of the telegram, and the effect of the mysterious message was to throw Lizeth into a fit of grumbling that Dolor should be so foolish as to stir them up with a telegram like that when a letter was on its way, and to send Alwilda into the dining-room, where she began work upon an enormous tombstone, large enough to contain the names of all her family.

The butcher went to the village, where he said he would stay until a letter came, and then bring it to

us forthwith. Griscom Brothers was taken into council, and he declared it was his opinion that it was clams. Dolor would be sure to call for them, and as the Canadians were not a clam-eating people they probably did not know how to cook them. Nothing would be more likely to give rise to a telegram like that than a quantity of badly cooked clams. He felt keenly on this point, for he knew how clams should be cooked so that they would hurt no one, and had he been in Montreal the case might have been quite different.

The next day at noon, the butcher, who had stayed in the village all night, leaving his poultry, the sandpiper, and the *Merry Chanter* to take care of themselves, brought a letter from Lord Crabstairs.

It was addressed to me, and read as follows:

MY DEAR SIR: I am sorry to be obliged to write to you that I have been knocked out of time worse than any man ever was since the beginning of the world. My wife sent you a telegram this morning, but she tells me she did not go into details, so I shall write you how matters stand, although it is not of the least use, except to make our friends unhappy. We stopped at Boston, because Dolor said that as she had originally started to go there she would like to do it, and she did me the honor to declare that she traveled with as merry a chanter as if she had sailed in your ship. Then she wanted to go to Montreal, and we went there; for I was not in the least afraid to travel in Canada, where I knew no one, and where I should register no name but that of George Garley, which I bore before I came into the title. Well, we saw the sights of Montreal, and they did us no harm. But one of the Cabinet Ministers happened to be in town, and they gave him a public reception, and of course Dolor wanted to go to that, and we went. A lot of heavy swells went in ahead of us, each with some sort of a title or other, and I noticed as Dolor heard these names called out she got more and more uneasy, and just as we were coming up to the scratch she

took out of my hand a card on which I had written "Mr. and Mrs. Garley," and herself gave to the usher one of the cards which we had had printed for use in the States only. When we were announced as Lord and Lady Crabstairs, we created a fine sensation, I assure you; for nobody of that rank had gone in yet, and I dare say there is no duchess in England who can carry herself in better style and form than my little wife did. She was as proud as a gilded peacock, and I must say that I was a good deal that way myself. I had never had any good of the title, and I was glad something had come of it. Dolor was so particularly tickled by the deferential manner in which she was treated that I was ashamed I had ever thought of presenting the card of Mr. and Mrs. Garley. The next morning, when I went into the reading-room of the hotel, the first man I saw was that infernal attorney who had brought me the news, in front of my own house, of my accession to the title and the debts. It is of no use to write much about this; it is too beastly miserable even to think about. The wretched cad had found out I had gone to America, and the inheritors of the claims had sent him over to look me up. But he had not heard a bit about me until he saw in the morning paper that Lord and Lady Crabstairs had attended the reception the evening before. He had the papers, and he nabbed me on the spot, and now I go back to England to spend the rest of my life in a debtor's dungeon, and to think that my poor dear did it simply because she thought I ought to be as big a swell as any of them. I vow I wish I had done it myself. Well, it is all up. Life is all up. Everything is all up, so far as we are concerned. The whole world has gone to the bad. What is to be done, I cannot say. In a week I am to sail for England, but it is impossible for Dolor to go with me. She would not be allowed to share my dungeon, and I would not have her do it. Moreover, I could not endure to look through a narrow slit in the wall and see her wandering about the neighborhood where she did not know one street from another, and wasting to a skeleton day by day. But how I am to go away and leave her, I know not. So here we are in blackest misery. By the eleven devils who continually howl around Judas Iscariot, I wish that the first Lord Crabstairs had been born dead!

Yours wretchedly, CRABSTAIRS.

For the sake of Dolor, I stick to the title.

This letter was read aloud in the presence of the two Tripp sisters, Doris, and the butcher. When it was finished Alwilda and Lizeth arose without a word, put on their black-and-white striped sunbonnets, and went out — one to the dining-room, and the other to the poultry-yard. Doris and I gazed at each other in silence, but the butcher stood up with flashing eyes and heaving breast.

"Who is to go to Montreal?" he said.

"To Montreal?" I repeated. "There 's no use in any one going there in a case like this; there is nothing to be done."

"If no one else goes," said the butcher, "I shall go."

"That you shall not do," said Doris. "It would not be suitable or proper. I am going."

She went, and of course I went with her.

WE found the bridal couple in doleful plight. Lord Crabstairs was a prisoner in his hotel, awaiting the departure of the steamer on which his passage had been taken. Poor Dolor was plunged in blackest grief.

"Of course you did not understand the telegram I sent," she sobbed. "It was n't half strong enough."

Her husband was a brave fellow, and tried to put the best face on the matter, especially when his wife was present.

"I dare say I shall have a bit of a jolly time now and then," he said, "and that things will not be quite as bad as we have been thinking they would be. I never speak to that wretched cad of an attorney

about anything, but I have heard that they turn debtors into a court now and then to take the fresh air, and perhaps they 'll let me keep chickens. That would be no end jolly! And, more than that," he exclaimed, his whole face lighting up, "who knows but that they 'll let me have a cow? I know I could keep a cow in a stone court-yard, and if they will let me serve milk and eggs to the fellows in the other dungeons I would have lots to do, especially when it came to the collecting of the monthly bills."

This kind of talk may have cheered the poor man a little, but it did not cheer us. Our principal concern was for Dolor. We had read stories of the Fleet and the Marshalsea, and supposed it likely that Lord Crabstairs might in time learn to endure life in a debtors' prison; but Dolor would be an absolute stranger in England, and she could not be allowed to go there. So there was nothing for her to do but to return to her home.

We spoke privately to Lord Crabstairs on this subject, and he agreed with us.

"Of course that 's the place for her," he said; "and I would rather think of her there than anywhere else, but there is one thing about it that worries me. I don't want her to go there if that butcher intends to live in the neighborhood. Not that I have anything to say against the butcher. He is an honest man and tossed up fair every time, and if at the last tossing two tails had come up instead of two heads, perhaps he might have had her. But that 's neither here nor there. Heads turned up and there was an end to him."

Neither of us answered this remark. Doris looked as if she had something to say, but she did not say it.

"I will write to him," exclaimed Lord Crabstairs, "and put the matter fair and square before him. Then he will surely see it as I do."

"Anything like that," said Doris, somewhat severely, "you must certainly attend to yourself."

Lord Crabstairs wrote to the butcher and put the matter fair and square before him. On the next day but one this answer came by telegraph:

"If her coming home depends on my going, I go."

"There is a man for you!" exclaimed Doris, with a slight flush on her face as she read this telegram.

I made no reply. The butcher was well enough in his way, but he was not a man for me.

Dolor knew nothing of the letter or the telegram. That evening she said to us:

"I have been thinking about going home. It will be perfectly dreadful with my husband snatched away to a living death, and every hope in life shattered and shivered, but in some ways it may be better than it used to be. I shall have more company. I dare say the *Merry Chanter* will not sail for ever so long, and I shall often see you two, and perhaps the captains, to say nothing of Griscom Brothers and the schoolmaster. The butcher, too, is a very pleasant man, and probably he will always live in the neighborhood."

At this Lord Crabstairs leaned his head upon his hands and gave a groan. Dolor stepped quickly to his side and put her arm about his neck.

"Poor fellow!" she said. "I wish I better knew

how to help you to bear your misery! And to think," she suddenly exclaimed, standing erect, with her eyes sparkling with indignation, "the people who really owed these horrible debts, as well as the people to whom the debts were owed, have been dead so long that they have even ceased to be corpses!"

XX

THE COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES

ORIS and I agreed to stay in Montreal until the very last minute, and when the steamer should be entirely out of sight we would return home, taking Dolor with us. To Lord Crabstairs we privately promised that before starting we would telegraph to the butcher.

Saturday was the steamer's sailing day, and on Friday morning the attorney came to Lord Crabstairs's room, where Doris and I were paying an early visit to the unfortunate couple. Lord Crabstairs had declared he would never again speak a word to this attorney, who had dogged him across the Atlantic. But this time he broke through his rule.

"What do you mean," he cried, "by this impertinence? Is it not enough to have one cur keeping guard outside the door without another pushing himself into the room?"

This harsh speech made not the least impression upon the attorney, who quietly remarked: "Half an hour ago I received a message by cable concerning you which I did not in the least understand. But in

picking up the morning paper I find this dispatch from London, which is a curious bit of news, and may interest you." And handing a newspaper to Lord Crabstairs he stepped to one side.

Lord Crabstairs took the paper and read aloud the following news item:

Considerable interest has lately been excited with regard to the case of Lord Crabstairs, who recently succeeded, not to the estate,—for there is none,—but to the title of this ancient family. It is well known that his only inheritance was a vast mass of debts, some of which began to accumulate in the seventeenth century, and which were increased and multiplied by a long line of ancestors, so that many years ago it became impossible for any descendant of the house to pay them. In consequence of this unfortunate state of affairs the new Lord Crabstairs became liable to arrest at the moment of his coming into the title, and to be sent to the debtors' jail, where so many of his forefathers had passed their lives. The public has already been made aware that this new nobleman evaded the officers of the law and fled to America, where, in Montreal, he was recently arrested as an absconding debtor. The publication of the facts in the London papers attracted the attention of an American gentleman, Mr. Copley Westbridge, who has been for some time in Europe expending a large portion of his great fortune in collecting material with which to found an antiquarian museum in New-York. Mr. Westbridge pays much attention to antiquities of every kind, and the case of Lord Crabstairs interested him greatly. He obtained permission to examine the vast mass of claims, bonds, defeasances, judgments, executions, warrants, mortgages, bills, writs of *elegit* and of *capias ad satisfaciendum*, and legal papers of every variety originating in the reigns, protectorates, and regencies of two centuries; and all so worded and drawn as to bear upon the unfortunate man who happened to be Lord Crabstairs, no matter in what period of time or part of the world. This mass of ancient and curious documents appeared so valuable to Mr. Westbridge that he bought the whole of it for his museum.

The descendants of the original creditors consented to accept a fixed price for the collective debts, and Mr. Westbridge signed a quitclaim, which entirely absolved Lord Crabstairs and his descendants from any connection with the debts of his forefathers. By this transaction this unique and highly valuable collection of legal curiosities goes to the States, and a British peer is made a freeman on his native soil.

As Lord Crabstairs read this piece of news his voice became louder and louder, and I am sure the eyes of all of us opened wider and wider, and that our hearts beat faster and faster. Dropping the paper, Lord Crabstairs stepped towards the attorney.

"What is the message you received?" he shouted.

"It was very short," replied the attorney; "merely these words: 'No further claims against your prisoner; release him.' Therefore, my lord, you are no longer under arrest. Good-morning."

With two shouts of wild ecstasy Lord and Lady Crabstairs rushed into each other's arms, and Doris and I quietly withdrew.

The gayest, happiest, and most madly hilarious three people in the Dominion of Canada that day were Doris and Lord and Lady Crabstairs. I, too, was wonderfully well pleased, but my pleasure did not exhibit itself in extravagant manifestations such as those of my companions.

"What are you going to do?" asked Doris of Lord Crabstairs as we all sat at luncheon together. "Are you going back to England? Have you any sort of an ancestral pile left to you?"

"I really do not know," replied his lordship. "I have never gone very deeply into the beastly business.

Whether there was an entail or no entail, there is nothing left, anyway. But if anything were left, I should have nothing to do with a stick or a stone that belonged to my ancestors, for fear that the American antiquarian had overlooked a paper or two, and that some sort of antiquated debt in geometrical progression still stuck to the property. I own a neat little place in Bucks, and if everything has n't been scattered to the four winds, there is a cow there, and a lot of high-bred poultry, two dogs, and a cat, and some of the prettiest flower-beds you ever saw in your life. Lord and Lady Crabstairs will live there, and if the other lords of the realm think that my house is too humble an abode for a British peer they can smother their mortification until I make money enough to build a better one. I intend that the next house of the Crabstairs shall date from me."

It was decided that the best thing for us all to do was to return together to the Tripp house. We wrote at once to announce the good news of our coming, and we were met at the railroad station by a little crowd of friends. Lizeth Tripp was there, but not Alwilda, who would not leave the house unprotected even on an occasion like this. The four captains were there, and Griscom Brothers, and the schoolmaster, and very prominent among the others the butcher, wearing a freshly washed and starched gown, and a shining high silk hat. Having heard that Dolor's husband was coming back with her, he did not think it necessary to leave the neighborhood. Behind this little group of friends stood the entire population of the village.

We walked to the Tripp house in a long procession, the baggage of the bridal pair being gladly carried by the four captains, the schoolmaster, Griscom Brothers, and the butcher. The villagers followed us for a short distance only. They all knew what sort of a woman Alwilda Tripp was. The hired man had come down to the station, but he had hurried back ahead of us, and now stood at the open gate bearing a huge sunflower, which he presented to Lady Crabstairs.

"I don't believe there 's another person in this world," said Lizeth, when we had reached the house, "on whom that man would have wasted nearly a gill of chicken seed."

We found Alwilda in the dining-room, standing before the huge tombstone she had painted on the wall. She quietly submitted to the embrace of her sister, and very civilly returned the salutations of the rest of the party.

"I am very much puzzled," she then remarked, "to know what to do with that tombstone. I don't want to scrape it out, because I took a great deal of pains with it, and yet, as things have turned out, it does n't seem to be suitable."

"Who is that sprawling nigger at the foot of the stone with his head in a brass pan?" asked Lord Crabstairs.

"By that," replied Alwilda, "I intended to represent the downfall of an African king."

At this we all laughed heartily, and Lord Crabstairs cried:

"Well, whatever you do, madam, paint out the

nigger. He does n't suit at all. And if you want an inscription for your tombstone I 'll give you one: 'Here lies two centuries of debt, and the devil take it!'"

"I might put that," said Alwilda, "except the part about the devil. I can have instead of it 'now departed.'"

"I think I can propose something better than that," cried Doris. "You can cut off the top of the gravestone so as to make it look like the base of a monument, and on this you can paint a handsome column or obelisk. You can make a flower-bed of the fallen African king, and pretty vines can twine themselves about the base of the stone. These, with blossoming shrubs and flowers on each side and in the background, will make a very cheerful picture. Then on the monument I propose you paint these words: 'To the memory of the good ship *Merry Chanter*, which'"— She hesitated a few moments, and then said: "I cannot think of a good sentiment. Will not one of you help me?"

Griscom Brothers smiled, and in a moment said:

"Perhaps this might do: 'To the memory of the good ship *Merry Chanter*, which made slow time but fast friends.'"

"Capital!" said Doris. And we all agreed that this would be an exceedingly appropriate inscription.

"I'll paint it in that way," said Alwilda. And immediately she went to work upon it.

XXI

THE *MERRY CHANTER* LEAVES SHANKASHANK BAY

ORD and Lady Crabstairs remained with us at Dolor's old home for a week or more, and then started on a short western tour. When this continuation of their bridal trip was completed they would sail for England to take possession of their small estate in Buckinghamshire, where, as the humblest and happiest of all lords and ladies, they expected to build up a little paradise.

Every one of us was sorry to have them go, and each of us gave them some little memento: the butcher's present was a beautiful new cleaver of the best steel.

"This sort of thing," he said, "comes very handy in the kitchen."

And then speaking to me in an under voice he remarked:

"They say that sharp-edged tools cut love, but there are cases when this does n't matter."

The four captains brought queer things which they had picked up in distant lands, and Griscom Brothers put a little oyster pie in a tin can and told them they

must think of him when they ate it in their own house.

"I do not need anything," said Dolor, "to make me remember the ghost who used to leave pies at my door."

"I have n't anything that will do for a memento," said Alwilda; "but I will paint your portraits from memory and send them to you."

"May the ship sink that carries them!" muttered the butcher.

The day after the departure of Lord and Lady Crabstairs, Doris and I walked down to the shore to look at our ship.

"Do you know," said Doris to me, "that I am very much afraid the *Merry Chanter* will never sail again. I don't believe the highest kind of tide will lift her now. She must have become a permanent portion of the earth's surface."

I had long been waiting for an opportunity to assert myself, and to make plain to Doris the value of my opinions and my decisions. I considered such action as due to my personal dignity, and had only postponed it because no proper occasion had appeared to offer itself. Now an occasion offered.

"There is no need of surmises on the subject," I said. "I have positively determined that that ship is not fit for navigating purposes, and that we must give up all idea of sailing in her to any place whatever."

"I am glad you think so," said Doris, "because I was afraid I might have some trouble in convincing you that now we ought not to think of such a thing as taking voyages in our ship. But what shall we

do with her?" she continued. "But here comes the butcher. Let us ask him."

The butcher, who had been rowing from the ship, now ran his boat upon the beach. When Doris had asked his advice upon the important subject under consideration, he stood for some moments holding his chin in his hand.

"I 'll make you an offer," he said. "I like living on board the schooner. It suits me first-rate. She 's got a splendid foundation, and will stand storms like a lighthouse. If you say so, I 'll buy her of you."

My wife and I retired a little for consideration.

"There cannot be the slightest doubt about it," said Doris. "We should sell him the ship, for it is of no earthly use to us."

"Very well," said I; "let us sell it to him."

THE butcher bought the *Merry Chanter*, and with the purchase-money in our pockets Doris and I prepared to leave Shankashank Bay for a little inland town, where we would set up a home entirely unconnected with maritime pursuits.

On the morning of the day we were to leave we went on board the *Merry Chanter* for a final visit. The schoolmaster received us at the beach, and rowed us to the ship. As we stepped on deck the butcher, in whitest gown and blackest hat, received us with a sorrowful courtesy. Griscom Brothers was on board with the four old captains, who had come over purposely to bid us farewell. We were all there except the lively Lord Crabstairs and the pretty Dolor. The butcher thought it proper to allude to this fact.